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THE
HEIRESS OF BRUGES;
A TALE
OF THE YEAR SIXTEEN HUNDRED.

BY
THOMAS COLLEY GRATAN,
AUTHOR OF "HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS,"
"TRAITS OF TRAVEL," &c.

Alasse, alasse ! what a thing Love is ; why it is like to an ostry faggot,
that once set on fire, is as hardly to be quenched, as the bird crocodill driven
out of her nest.

LODGE AND GREEN.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.
VOL. III.

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HENRY COLBURN AND RICHARD BENTLEY,
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THE
HEIRESS OF BRUGES.

CHAPTER I.

THE house to which Theresa was conducted by its noble owner is still one of the most curious monuments of domestic architecture in Brussels. Situated near the palace, on the north-east side of the hill of Caudenberg, and built chiefly of brick in the fashion of a still remoter day, it shewed in its angles and many arches a mixture of stonemasonry of Gothic style, which gave to the whole a

mingled air of lightness and solidity. Its front, which looked towards the palace, was approached by an archway of granite, opening into a large court-yard and elevated garden; and close by there was a steep and almost impassable precipice, the immense body of the building bounding it all the way down at one side, in a perpendicular mass of brickwork, pierced with sundry square windows. The back part of the mansion rose up in considerable height, from a narrow street leading towards the park, named after the Archduchess Isabella, in which were a few other isolated houses, but which was then chiefly occupied by stables belonging to some noble families; and it was bounded at one side by the extensive gardens and practice-ground of the archers of St. Sebastian.

The whole neighbourhood was at that period wild and slovenly, but it has been long since thickly built upon. The house, which still exists almost perfectly, is hidden from view towards the front, by those of the Montagne de la Cour, and the narrow street of St. Laurent. A broad flight

of irregular and ill-paved steps have been inserted in the precipice above-mentioned, leading down to the rear of the building, which is still strikingly remarkable, with its two oriel windows, and the sculptured escutcheons of the Assembourgs, standing out like prominent features from the face of the main wall.

The most considerable and most elevated of those projections belongs to a large chamber which at the time of our story was one of state, and as such was appropriated to the use of the marquess's fair guest or prisoner, whichever Theresa may be considered to have been. She, at least, looked on herself in the latter light, and took possession of her apartment with a heavy heart. She had the consolation of finding in it, on her arrival, Madame Marguerite and Nona; and of observing that the bed-rooms destined for them, as well as her own, opened each into this main chamber, which was lofty and gloomy, and little calculated to bring any comforting associations to the minds of its occupants.

Madame Marguerite seemed, however, to feel her situation not oppressively irksome. She had left the hostel, on the summons of an officer despatched from the minister Zaputa; and, without hearing more than general intimations that Van Rozenhoed was about to undergo some examination on matters of state, she cheerfully set out, under such high official auspices. Securing a soft place for Fanchon in the carriage that conveyed them, her anxieties, if she had any, soon sunk into a repose as sound as the lap-dog's, on some corner cushion of her own downy disposition. She was surprised as much as shocked, when Theresa joined her in her new abode, to observe the evidences of recent agitation and present unhappiness, which our heroine made no effort to conceal. But all these appeared very unreasonable to her, when the polite explanation of the marquess, in whom she recognised an old acquaintance, told her that the arrest of her kinsman, and Theresa's removal to his own protection, were adopted less from severity than from the tender care of the arch-

duchess towards her young friend, for whom the most brilliant prospects were rapidly unfolding, and these he briefly but explicitly explained.

“ Ah, marquess !” exclaimed she, as the statement was finished, “ how fortunate for this dear child to have excited the attention of her highness ! and how all this reminds me of the last time I had the pleasure of meeting you, now approaching thirty years, alas ! But time has touched you lightly, marquess. Were it not for a slight stoop o’ the shoulders, a grizzled beard, a bald head, and the loss of your teeth, I might fancy you the same gay gallant you were the day the great deputation waited on our old governess, Marguerite of Parma, who, as you must remember, made the match at the masquerade, the same evening, between me and your poor friend the chevalier, my own cousin-german, with whom I was happily married the following Sunday, in the church of St. Gudule, near this very spot.”

“ Ay, well I remember it ; and a happy sea-

son it was for the poor chevalier, rest his soul, amen !”

“ Amen !” responded the good dame, her eyes streaming with tears, while the marquess continued,

“ For duly did we all, young fellows that envied his happiness, do homage to the lovely complexion, chestnut curls, and sylph-like form of his blooming bride. And, in sooth, I need not now draw deeply on memory to recal her ; for were it not that wrinkles will steal upon the fairest skin, and crow’s-feet leave their stamp between the cheek and eye, and the loveliest tresses turn grey, and the lightest figures grow fat—were it not for these small tokens, but little would be required to make me see before me the blithesome dame Marguerite de Lovenskerke, who changed her state, but not her name, in wedding her own cousin Ralph.”

With old reminiscences and complimentary speeches like these, in which, notwithstanding

the good feeling of the speakers, a captious mind might trace some of the latent bitterness that lurks in the best natures, the marquess and Madame Marguerite contrived to while away the afternoon, until towards sunset, when preparations were commenced for the supper which the marquess had ordered for his fair guests, and which, with a gallant air, he requested the honour of being permitted to partake. But there had been little in all this to interest Theresa. She had vainly asked permission of the marquess to visit her father in his prison. He declared it was as much as his place was worth to suffer her to quit his mansion without the special commands of the archduchess; and he intimated that the close examination of Van Rozenhoed by the officers of the state, would make any communication for that day impossible. He, however, freely allowed Theresa to send one of the varlets of her father's establishment, who were ordered to attend her bidding, with a letter, informing him of her situation, and requesting to know the particulars

of his. To this a verbal message was returned, stating that as soon as leisure allowed Van Rozenhoed to write, Theresa should have an ample answer, by the hands of his tried and trusty domestic Jans Broeklaer.

Her cheeks turned pale at the thought of this man being still in his master's confidence; and she revolved in her mind a hundred expedients for warning her father of the treachery of which she was herself convinced. Absorbed in such thoughts, she paid little attention to the conversation of the marquess and Madame Marguerite, until it turned on subjects that never failed to interest her—the present state of the country, the proceedings of the patriots, and the revolt of De Bassenveldt.

“ Ay, indeed is he a bold rebel, I assure you,” said the marquess, impressing a former observation on Madame Marguerite's attention. “ Why it was but the day before yesterday—”

“ Thursday, the 27th.”

“ The day before yesterday.”

“The very day we arrived from Ghent.”

“Very likely, Madame Marguerite, very likely—nothing more so—but be the exactness of the date, or your particular circumstances or situation what they might, I repeat that it was the day before yesterday that this revolted count, mounted on his Arabian steed, in his black armour, blue scarf, and white-plumed helmet, and at the head of three or four hundred of his troopers, rode in defiance almost to the very ramparts of Brussels, and swept along through the villages of Ixelle and Etterbeeke, scarcely out of the range of our guns.”

“What a horrid wretch, marquess! How lucky we were, riding quietly along, that we did not fall in with him and his odious band of rebels!”

“It is indeed well for all that is virtuous and beautiful,” (and here the marquess’s eyes turned from Madame Marguerite upon Theresa’s countenance,) “to escape the contact of so vile a libertine, for neither place nor person are secure against him.”

Theresa's cheeks bore witness that her pride and resentment were aroused from their long slumber by these words.

“And why, marquess,” asked Madame Marguerite, “is the insolent creature allowed to beard the bravery of Brabant, here in the very seat of power?”

“Why, in truth, I must confess it, necessity disables us from chastising him just now. Our garrison scarcely affords a squadron of dragoons fit for service. Every disposable regiment has been sent off under the Count de Berg, against Crevecœur, St. Andrew's, and the other revolted places. Welbasch Castle, the stronghold of this De Bassenveldt, is not yet attacked; but preparations are making to concentrate and march against it a force which will soon drive the rebel back to his den, and then be sufficient to destroy him. The command is to be taken by your governor of Bruges, Trovaldo, who is better fitted to oppose a bold enemy in field or fortress, than to deal with boisterous burghers in a town. Your

pardon, ladies, both ! I speak with no meaning of offence to the worthy citizens of Flanders. They, too, as we see, may be the dupes of designing rebels, such as this very youth De Bassenveldt, who, they say, has the cunning of the serpent with the bravery of the lion.”

“ Ah, marquess, and well he may, for his whole race were deep and desperate men. Without going back into times of darkness, we may be satisfied with the memory of his own father, Gabriel de Bassenveldt, whom I well recollect. Ay, he is before my eyes this moment, with his fierce and haughty look, when he came furious from the meeting of nobles at St. Trond, to join that very deputation of which I spoke erewhile, and of which you yourself formed one. When William of Nassau in all his greatness, and his gallant brother Louis, with De Brederode, St. Aldegond, and the other chiefs were thrown into the shade by De Bassenveldt’s bold bearing, when he took the word from them all, clapped his hand on his sword, and swore that if the governess had been

but a man, he would have cut her throat for the country's good."

"Your memory is indeed accurate, Madame Marguerite. These were his very words, recorded in his sentence."

"Yes, marquess, I heard him speak them, and shake his clenched fist the while. And well I remember, that when I and the other ladies in the comptroller's balcony, hung with tulip-flowered yellow arras, on the left hand side of the hall, shrieked aloud, old Marguerite of Parma laughed and held her sides, and told De Bassenveldt that if she *were* a man she would have wrung his neck on his shoulders for his boldness."

"Ah, Madame Marguerite, men spoke their minds in those days, and women too. And well had it been for Count Gabriel he had confined himself to words."

"He was not the man for that, marquess, as well you know, and all the world knows, and as poor Maurice Kraft, the chamberlain, could tell the best of all, had not Count Gabriel struck

him dead with one blow of his gauntlet on the temple, in the very palace court, when he reproached him with the affront he had offered to the governess."

"And for which blow he had paid the forfeit—"

"Ay, marquess, of his life, had they but caught him. But he was, like this rebel son of his, light of foot and quick of purpose; and he fled, no one knew where, leaving his only child an infant behind him. And it seems like yesterday that I heard John Spelleken, the hangman, with his black dress and his red wand in his hand, read aloud in the market-place the sentence of confiscation of Count Gabriel's estates and forfeiture of his titles, and his banishment for twenty-five years from all the states of the king, as the penalty of this murder. And truth to say, it struck upon me yesterday as an awful coincidence, when I saw the son of this same De Bassenveldt hang in effigy on the very spot, and heard the executioner read a sentence nearly

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the same which I had so long before heard pronounced against the father."

"Most awful it is to see wickedness descend like an heir-loom from generation to generation!" replied the marquess, throwing up his hands and eyes, which had been all until that moment busily employed in selecting and serving the nicest morsels of the excellent supper. "But these," continued he, "are doleful subjects for your beautiful young kinswoman here. I see, by her expressive countenance, that she ill brooks the mention of those guilty men."

"Excuse me, marquess," said Theresa, starting, "my thoughts are with my father; my anxiety urges me to ask you the particulars of the charges against him, and of the traitor who has denounced him."

"Traitor he is, in the double sense of the word, young lady. And though his name is not given to the public, it is confidentially communicated to us of the archdukes' intimacy. I cannot however keep you ignorant of this secret

enemy, as you may now be considered of the princess's train, and consequently one of us. It is, then, one Claassen who has denounced his worship the burgomaster of Bruges. And little better could be expected from a factious follower of false lights, a Calvinistic tanner, than treason first and treachery after."

"Ah, then, my father's misgivings were too true! It was jealousy that drove Claassen to this!"

"They say so, indeed," said the marquess, with a smile; "but still I marvel, in that case, how the young tanner could have joined to betray one rival, this Boonen whom they seek, and ensure to the Baron de Roulemonde the very object the love of which—nay, blush not, fair young lady—has driven him almost mad. It is, in fact, an intricate affair, and full of mystery."

Theresa, confounded by the mixture of conjectures that crowded on her at this conflicting information, could only repeat the words,

"The *young* tanner!"

“ Ay, lady, if two and twenty may be called so, in these precocious times.”

“ Why, was it, could it be *young* Claassen, that has spread this web of danger for me and mine? my suspicions fixed on the father.”

“ Lady, he *is* young, and named Renault by baptismal rites. I saw him with these eyes this very day; and a miserable conscience-stricken object he looked.”

“ He is *here*, in Brussels, then?”

“ Ay, lady is he—the denouncer of your father, and the companion of your affianced lord, Lyderic Baron de Roulemonde.”

“ Can such baseness be—can Renault Claassen have done this !” mentally exclaimed Theresa. But she suffered no further expression to pass her lips. The various links of a long chain of thought were rapidly run through; and the main ones were those that connected the conviction of Jans Broeklaer’s treachery, with the information now given of that of Renault Claassen; and she remembered well how on several occasions

the former had, in his privileged loquacity as an old and confidential servant, dilated on the merits of the latter, in a way that seemed now to account for their complicity, had the object been to gain her for Renault Claassen; but that he should become an agent of infamy to secure her for De Roulemonde seemed inexplicable.

It was nightfall ere Theresa's anxiety relative to her father was relieved by the announcement that Jans Broeklaer waited in the hall below with a letter and the remainder of Theresa's clothes, and some other articles left behind in the sudden removal from the hostel, and now placed at the disposal of the owners by the commissary appointed by Don Zeronimo Zaputa, and who accompanied these things, to witness their delivery and take a receipt for them.

To Theresa's animated request that the servant might be instantly admitted, the marquess gave his ready consent. She forgot for the moment her repugnance to the messenger, in consideration of his errand, and rose to meet him at the door;

but she started back, forcibly repelled, on discovering at a glance through his disguise, that the pretended commissary was no other than Renault Claassen; and as to Jans Broeklaer, who had no disguise whatever, she could nevertheless scarcely recognise him. He carried on his shoulder one of those huge baskets of strong but light wicker-work, with clasps and locks, which generally served the purposes of travelling trunks at that period, when sumpter horses or mules were chiefly employed to carry baggage, and which are still very common for this use in the low countries. The weight of this basket produced a most appalling effect on the bearer's countenance, which seemed straining and bloated almost to bursting; while his person, instead of its usual slight but muscular appearance, shewed a corpulent unwieldiness which an ill-fitting doublet, not of his livery suit, made more prominent. Before Theresa could address a sentence of the many which crowded for utterance, he set down his load, with more tenderness than might have been expected

towards what had so much oppressed him ; and he then sat down on it, with but little ceremony towards the presence in which he appeared.

As if to distract the marquess's attention, the false commissary approached him, and with a fluency of official jargon, well assumed, he employed him, while Jans, rapidly recovering, endeavoured by sundry signs of manual hieroglyphic to impress on Theresa that he reposed on somewhat of secret importance. She could not comprehend him, having no confidence in nor sympathy with his demonstrations. But she hastily read the billet he handed to her, while Madame Marguerite, in a voice of astonishment, exclaimed in Flemish, no other language being cognoscent to Jans Broeklaer,

“ Why, Jans, man, what has come over you ? you are grown so portly and lazy ! and your livery ? Have you thrown that aside ? Why, what is all this metamorphosis ? ”

“ Ah, Madame Marguerite,” replied he, expressively, “ the livery of the Van Rozenhoeds is

no passport to honour or safety in this place ; and if I have grown somewhat fat on a sudden, be assured it is not from want of exertion in saving some matters of consequence to my master and my young mistress here. Ask no questions, but trust to Providence.”

“ Ah, Jans, Jans, you were always a cunning, scheming varlet—but I know you to be honest, and I shall not interfere with you or your sly doings,” added Madame Marguerite, glad to be saved the trouble of inquiry.

“ My father tells me here, Mr. Commissary,” said Theresa, in a calm and steady tone, but with a look that could not quite conceal her anxious curiosity, “ that you will deliver to me the contents of this basket, which you hold under lock and key ; and that I shall therein learn every particular of his situation and wishes. Perhaps, marquess, I may trespass on your indulgence while this proceeding takes place ?”

“ My good young lady,” replied the obsequious old courtier, “ this house, and all it contains,

are at your command. Would that my duty allowed of its doors being open to your free passage out, as they are to the admission of all you may desire. But you are mistress of every part except my court-yard-gate. I will now wish you good night, and pleasant slumbers to ye both, fair ladies. When this respectable functionary has gone through the details of his mission, he and the worshipful burgomaster's serving-man shall find refreshment and good cheer below. May tomorrow's sun shine on your happiness, young lady ! and its beams be reflected in *your* still blooming countenance, my respected friend ! If the tooth of Time has poison at its root, it finds an antidote when it would gnaw the beauty of Madame Marguerite de Lovenskerke."

"What a dear and precious man it is !" exclaimed the benevolent dame, as the marquess bowed himself out of the room backwards. "How upright he walks—how fresh he looks ! There is the true court-breeding—politeness without flattery—sincerity and civility hand-in-hand !

And what sweet language ! How figurative ! Ah, this reminds me of early days of elegance ! Oh, what a difference between the refined airs of a palace, and the roughness of a stadt-house ! Dearest Theresa, how lucky we are to have gained the notice of the archduchess, and the protection of this amiable nobleman. And what a bright and blessed prospect is before you, with that fine young Baron Lyderic ! The De Roulemondes are a proud stock to be engrafted on, let me tell you. When the holy wars first roused the nations, and Hugo de Roulemonde—”

“ For Heaven’s sake, persuade her to leave the room. It is a case of life and death,” whispered Renault Claassen to Theresa, who immediately interrupted Madame Marguerite, saying,

“ My dear, dear, Madam, some other time will suit that subject better. Recollect that this gentleman, the court commissary, waits to complete his official duty. Had you not better retire to your sleeping chamber, while myself and Nona receive and count the contents of yonder basket ? Indeed,

poor Fanchon seems weary, and would gladly, methinks, seek her usual bed on your pillow."

"Dear creature, she does look drowsy; her lively little eyes are winking in their sockets," said Madame Marguerite, touched in this most tender point of her susceptibility—"and it is right to pay due consideration to the agent of the court. Yes, we will both retire, and leave you, Theresa love, to your task. Good night, Mr. Commissary! Jans Broeklaer, man, be not so loosely attired on the morrow, nor put aside your livery for a slovenly suit that is not suitable. The badge of Van Rozenhoed will not be henceforward a disregarded mark, or much I marvel. I see new honours and distinctions in store for the name. Bless you, dear child—sleep sound, and dream happily of your good fortune and the sweet Baron Lyderic!"

These last words accompanied the kind, nightly embrace she was wont to give our heroine, and she was soon shut safely in her sleeping-room. The instant she had disappeared, and ere Theresa had uttered a word, the three other persons left with

her in the chamber, sprang, as if by preconcerted arrangement, to their different points of action, to complete the purpose they were prepared to effect.

Claassen threw himself on his knees beside the basket, and precipitately opened the locks and clasps. Nona double bolted the chief door of the chamber, as well as that leading to Madame Marguerite's bed-room. And Jans Broeklaer flung off his buckram doublet, and to Theresa's infinite surprise and almost horror, uncoiled from round his body a rope of considerable thickness and length ; he then, without uttering a word, stepped briskly to the oriel window which stood out from the chamber, as has been already described, and opening back one of the narrow frames, he adroitly twisted the rope round the stanchion that separated the compartments, and tied, with his utmost strength, a many-doubled knot.

Theresa's eyes followed these movements of the confederates, and a sense of undefinable danger rushed through her. But she was transfixed with

terror when she saw the basket roll from side to side with violent motion, evidently caused by the struggles of some living thing within it. She almost fainted at the shock. The combination of Brocklaer, Claassen, and de Roulemonde, with treachery and outrage, filled at once her brain and heart. She fled in recovered vigour to the utmost distance of the chamber, while Nona came towards her and exclaimed,

“My dearest young mistress, have no fears. You cannot doubt *my* fidelity. Look, look ! do you not now understand all this ?”

Theresa’s tongue seemed to cleave to her palate, and her eyes felt glassy and frozen, as she saw, as through a mist, the figure of a man disengage itself from the basket ; when Renault Claassen, in his turn, came towards her and said, in a voice almost inarticulate,

“Oh, fear not, loveliest of your sex ; you must be convinced of *my* devotion ! See *him* and be confident and courageous. I leave the task of explanation to his tongue.”

With these words he moved towards the door, and Jans Brocklaer, replacing his doublet, which he clapped over and over his body, whispered hurriedly in Theresa's ear,

“ Could the daughter of my master suspect for one moment his old and grateful servant ? God bless you, Miss Theresa ! Keep a good heart, and trust all to *him*.”

He followed Claassen to the door, pointing as he uttered the last words to the figure, which now came rapidly forward. And as this new object of dread gently uttered the word “ Theresa ! ” the film seemed to fly from her eyes, her heart sprang up anew into the bosom it seemed to have abandoned, and following the instinctive movement that urged her on, she threw herself into the open arms of Lambert Boonen.

Such a movement at such a crisis must be decisive of the heart of any girl in whom susceptibility combines with sentiment ; when chaste and unabashed, she trusts herself to the impulse of nature, without one throb of guilt, or one tremor of alarm.

It is in this first, this *only* moment that woman is all but divine. Ere passion has grown to consciousness, or purity degenerated into art ; when she seems to stand on the verge of mortality, yet unappropriated between heaven and earth. And so stood Theresa then, clasped in the arms of him who was to her, at the moment, the whole universe combined.

When an accurate sense of reality dawned once more on her mind, she raised her head from the shoulder on which it reposed, and, in the first feeling of modest sensitiveness, looked around to see if other eyes than his had watched her. They stood alone. Nona had followed the movement of Claassen and Brocklaer, and stepped into Theresa's room, for the double purpose of leaving her mistress and the apprentice undisturbed, and making some rapid preparations for the measure, to forward which she was half ready.

Lambert Boonen, after a few brief moments given to his triumphant consciousness of Theresa's love, broke the luscious silence in which he held

her to him, and murmured a sentence of gratitude and joy. She replied, in words too faint for echo, too fine for other ears than his to whom alone they spoke; but so true to nature, virtue, and affection, that every mind can imagine them, and most will remember to have heard or spoken such on some one occasion similar to that we now describe.

“Then you will trust yourself to me without scruple or dread? You ask no explanation of my conduct—no pledge for my honour—the past and future are alike disregarded—you repose entirely on me?”

“Yes, wholly and for ever! On whom may I rely but you? Are you not my only friend in this hour of mystery and danger? Do not your uncle, my father, my own heart, confirm your title to my utmost confidence? Deal with me as you like, lead me where you will, my life, my honour are from this hour a portion of your own.”

Such were the first positive phrases uttered on either side after those vague murmurings of the heart alluded to above. These words were spoken

in a tone of firm and well assured confidence, worthy the sweet and solemn obligation they implied.

“Then, so far, love has triumphed !” exclaimed the apprentice, as Theresa finished the sentence which sealed his success. “To this point, wealth, and rank, and ambition, have all sunk before its sway ! But much remains, Theresa, beautiful and blessed creature that thou art, to try the heart that thus devotes itself to mine. I scorn to take it by surprise. I would not, for the immeasurable rapture of its profession, accept it with the angel form it throbs in, without the conviction that reason and reflection ratified the gift. Thou scarcely knowest me yet. ’Tis true, the days that have run past have had the pith of ages in them, but I have yet to prove me worthy of thy love, and many a deed to do ere thou may’st know me to be so. Events come crowding on ; dangers beset us on the entrance to the path that ought to lead to bliss. Temptations assail thee ; and perils environ me. Each and all must be met, and van-

quished too, ere I can dare to claim thee as mine, or thou canst confirm the pledge of this unguarded moment. But that pledge—for 'tis of *thyself*, Theresa—is a holy deposit, which I swear to hold sacred ! and more, I vow, in Heaven's name, to yield it up unsullied—to give thee back unto thyself, pure as thou art this minute, if when thou knowest my nature and thine own, thy heart retracts the vow thy tongue has uttered."

"Generous and noble—in the heart's heraldry how truly noble ! Let me answer thee."

"That I could listen to thee on life's last verge, Heaven witness for me ! But now, Theresa, thy safety is at stake—the sand runs quickly in the glass. We have not one moment to lose, if moments such as this be not rather treasures snatched from time, though ruin tread upon his steps. Then list to me. This hour is big with thy fate. This very hour the plan is organized that forces thee to wed De Roulemonde with to-morrow's dawn. The act that confiscates thy father's whole fortune, and then, as a deed of grace, transfers it

to the husband of his daughter, is at this hour preparing. And as for me and that true-hearted being, young Claassen, we are marked for ruin, to remove the very shade of rivalry from the road of that base baron to whom they dare to doom thee. Thy father knows all. Brocklaer has been the means of acting between him and Claassen, who, in the guise of an abettor to his father's treachery, has come with Lyderic to watch over the object of his perfidious designs. To me he has been already a saviour. He has confided all to me, and joined, as thou has seen, to save thee from this fate. Spurning all jealousies, yielding up all rivalry, he last night made himself known to me, and saved me by timely warning, as he had attempted to do thy father, for it was his hand that placed the written caution in thine. In short, thou now knowest all that may be told. Flight is the only chance of safety. The means are at hand. Thine eyes have marked the measures we have taken. Canst thou, wilt thou venture? Sanctioned by thy father's commands, sure of his

safety, for without a line of proof against him, and with a thousand motives for forbearance on the part of the archdukes, not a hair of his head is perilled, thou hast every warrant to justify this decisive step. The Abbess of Saint Wyvin, two leagues hence, is prepared to expect thee in the sanctuary of her convent; and that all due decorum may be observed, thy worthy chaperone Madame Marguerite shall accompany us."

"Oh, much I fear she will not consent to leave the protection of this house, or sanction my flight!" said Theresa.

"Tut, tut—she *shall*!" answered the apprentice, with a tone of positive dictation, that sounded harsh in such rapid contrast with his previous seductive words.

"Thy quick eye, beloved one," added he, in rapid return to what Theresa thought his natural accent, "must have caught the meaning of Jans Brocklaer's preparations. That window, Theresa, that rope, yonder basket—such are our means of safety. The strength of thy mind will answer

yes, even while its innocence may shrink from a complicity with such a mode of flight."

A keen feeling of reproach shot through Theresa at these words, as the memory of her involuntary share in Beatrice's evasion flashed upon her ; and a deeper sense of degradation arose, with the recollection of the outrage that had that night defiled (as her delicacy considered it) the sacred purity of her fair form. Forgetting, for the instant, all other thoughts, she writhed under the upbraiding pang that seemed to tell her she was unworthy of the chaste enthusiasm of Lambert Boonen's late embrace, and her only feeling was the imperative desire to avow to him what she felt.

But before she could frame an utterable phrase, he once more folded his arm round her waist, and gently urged her towards the room where Nona made her preparations. A few persuasive words accompanied the movement ; and then, as a low whistle sounded far down in the vague space beneath the window, he loudly whispered—

“There is the signal, by Heavens! Claassen and Brocklaer are at their posts. There is no time for choice—thou must not speak, Theresa, I will not have thy consent—the whole responsibility of this step be on my head! I force thee to thy safety, in the sacred guardianship of thy parent’s wishes and thy lover’s will.”

These were the last words spoken. For when Theresa opened her lips in recovered energy, to pronounce her full assent, the apprentice, with impassioned audacity, pressed his own against them, and with one more long, deep kiss, set the seal of office on Love’s fiat.

In a few minutes more Theresa was equipped for flight, in a dress of plain materials, hastily procured by Renault Claassen, and carried in the basket, with another destined for Madame Marguerite.

Theresa gave no thought to the fashion or fitness of her loose robe of brown camlet, which a plain belt and buckle fastened round, and drew into plaits across the waist and bosom that would

have given grace to the coarsest stuff or clumsiest workmanship. A close coif contained her flowing ringlets, and over it was loosely thrown one of those black silk scarfs called *faillies*, peculiar to the females of Brussels, then as now, and well adapted to the purpose of unostentatious concealment. A travelling cloak covered all; and when with animated and tender looks she came out thus habited for her perilous enterprize, the apprentice could not resist squandering another precious minute in rapturously gazing on her. He had not been unemployed while Theresa made her hasty toilette; but had firmly fastened the extreme end of Jans Brocklaer's rope within the handles of the basket; and he now, in few words, assured Theresa and Nona of its perfect security for the purpose of their descent into the street.

With cautious delicacy towards Theresa, even in this moment of anxiety for her escape, when a lapse of punctilio might have been pardoned, the apprentice made Nona first enter the basket, that her mistress might be received in her faithful arms.

when she reached the earth. Nona fearlessly trusted herself to the guidance of him for whom she had been the sure and steady friend during his short but important course of courtship. In a few seconds she was safe below ; and the basket was quickly drawn up again to receive the most precious freight that could be embarked by a lover's hands to the chances of earth, sea, or air. Theresa took her place, with high-wrought confidence, gave one glance that spoke her whole mind to her lover ; and the rope which she held steadily above her head soon glided again in sinuous folds round the smooth stanchion that served to check its too rapid course, while the apprentice, with one foot firmly placed against the wall, gradually let it slip ; and as it vibrated between his hands and Theresa's, it formed a conductor for every pulse between heart and heart.

Our heroine safely reached the ground, where she was received by the respectful services of Nona, Jans Brocklaer, and Renault Claassen. By these she was released from her seat, and while

she spoke a few words of cordial import to the latter, which thrilled his breast with painful ecstasy, the basket was quickly pulled up again, to be reloaded with a weight that might well have strained its wicker thews and sinews.

As soon as the apprentice had the basket safely again in his possession, he approached the door of Madame Marguerite's room, and listening for a moment, he was satisfied that the unsuspecting dame was employed in her wonted task of nightly devotion. If he felt any qualms at disturbing her piety, they were stifled by the urging voice of necessity. He knew it would be vain to attempt reasoning her into the step he had decided on her taking. So trusting to his own agility and strength, he took up the capacious travelling dress, arranged by guess-work to her measure, softly drew back the bolt, and opened the bed-room door. He saw the good woman on her knees by her bedside, and stealing, unheard and unperceived, even by Fanchon, who slept profoundly on the pillow, he reached Madame Marguerite, threw the dress

completely over her head, tied it round her face and neck as closely as possible on the safe side of suffocation, and seized her in his arms, before she had time to be frightened, or power to express her astonishment. The inert and passive mass of flesh which the apprentice carried in his arms, and placed in the basket, might well have terrified a nervous man into a dread of death having wholly paralyzed it. But he judged that it was fear that had, after the first shock, seized on her; and he tied her into the contracted vehicle, placed the snarling and snapping Fanchon in her lap; then launched her on her aerial descent, and by powerful exertion held steady against the weighty drag, until he felt it arrested by the arms of the receivers below. Then catching the rope with hands, knees, and feet, he swung off from the window-frame, slipped actively down, and was soon safely on terra firma again.

The whole arrangement had been made with admirable method. Madame Marguerite, apparently either dead or dumb, was already placed on

a hand-litter, procured for the occasion, which Renault Claassen and Jans Brocklaer carried between them. And the apprentice drawing one of Theresa's arms under one of his, and Nona's under the other, the whole party immediately moved forward, up the hilly way leading to the park. They soon completed the ascent, through the waste grounds, and up the hill side, which the park trees at that time quite covered. They passed over one of the many breaches in the crumbling wall which surrounded it, and traversed its untrimmed alleys and bosquets, startling at times the deer with which it was stocked, while the nightingales, with whom its tall planes and elms have ever been a favourite resort, poured forth their songs to the many listening lovers beneath.

The party went on silently, and with little interruption but occasional halts for breath-taking by the litter-bearers, across the park in a sloping direction, towards the gate which then stood about the spot now occupied by that on the new Boulevards, leading to Louvaine, the only other entrance

being beyond where the king's palace and gardens stand at present. Another breach in the wall, on the opposite side to that which the party had crossed, allowed them to pass out from the park, and close to the foot of the ramparts. They there stopped at a stone stairway leading up directly to one of the several brick-built octagonal towers that garnished the city walls. This one, which was called, from legendary recollection, "the Weaver's Tower," may be still seen standing on its lonely mound, the last cracked and crumbling monument of those ancient defences of Brussels. The serjeant of the guard on duty there received the whole party, as expected guests; led them silently through the low door and narrow passage of the tower, and down a flight of steps into the fossé of the ramparts, and by a like means up the opposite mound, and out upon the open country overhanging the valley and ponds of Etterbeeke.

There the serjeant left them, and returned; the consideration for his services having been duly settled beforehand, by the provident liberality of

Theresa's confederate protectors. The least favoured, but the most disinterested of these, here also took his leave of her, accompanied by Broeklaer, and faithfully promising to make known her escape to her father by day-break. She spoke a few grateful sentences, which Renault Claassen received in silent homage. A horse-litter, with a single attendant, waited on the spot, with a led horse, which the apprentice mounted, having first placed the two ladies, with their tire-woman, in the vehicle.

Madame Marguerite was unbound; and her joy was unbounded, at finding herself safe with Theresa's Fanchon. She had no time allowed for inquiries, complaints, or congratulations, before the litter started off at a brisk pace, the leather curtains being drawn close round, by the careful apprentice, who rode at the side occupied by Theresa.

CHAPTER II.

As soon as Madame Marguerite recovered the power of utterance, she commenced a fluent volley of reproaches and threats against the unknown perpetrators of the outrage, which she supposed to have been shared by Theresa as well as herself. The latter did not undeceive her on that point, but endeavoured to tranquillize her by assurances that all was done with Van Rozenhoed's approval, and by expressions of her reliance on the integrity and courage of their deliverer, Master Lambert Boonen. Madame Marguerite was ill satisfied

with this information. She had hoped that this abduction had been a gallant extravagance on the part of Lyderic, as was common in those days of masquerade and mystery, when it was considered quite plebeian to attain the happiest results by the plainest means ; a system which the cold-hearted precision of modern taste has utterly reversed. A faint notion had even flashed before her mind that the gallant Marquess of Assembourg, warmed by the remembrance of her former charms, had raised the spirit of chivalry, for the substance of which he had been noted about the middle part of the century, just then at its close, and had followed up his figurative compliments by carrying her off in a sack, instead of quietly proposing for her hand and leading her to the altar in a wedding suit. Such were the extravagant imaginings that acted so composingly on the widow, when she found herself so suddenly seized in her bed-chamber, and which prevented her from making the least struggle or attempt at remonstrance during the whole course of the ad-

venture. That this should, after all, turn out to be a mere prudential measure to save Theresa from the brilliant misery prepared for her, and possibly marring those fair fancies which sprung from the marquess's tropes, was deeply mortifying, and more especially as it was effected through the agency of "a Boonen."

As the horses walked quietly up a rising ground, she exclaimed, "A Boonen carry off a De Lovenskerke, indeed! A-lack a-day, but it is come to a pretty pass with high blood! Better, aye, far better, to have been seized on by a Bassenveldt, even by the bold and bad Count Gabriel, or his old ancestor, Gerard the Saracen, were that possible. Let what might happen, there is less dishonour in the violence of nobility than in the protection of low birth."

"For Heaven's sake, Madame, speak not so, or at least not so loud, our benefactor and safeguard, Master Boonen, may be within hearing," whispered Theresa; and as she spoke, she felt an ungloved hand steal softly under the leathern cur-

tain of the litter, and by that instinct, which, somehow or other, never fails on such occasions, it was very soon cordially clasped in one of her's, and both responded in a silent movement of soft pressure, for which love beat double time in two bosoms.

“It is, however, some consolation that we are destined for the sanctuary of Grand Bygard,” resumed Madame Marguerite, after some pettish expressions of her indifference as to Master Boonen's ears being long or short, near or distant. “There we shall be in the safe keeping of the blessed relics of its foundress, the holy Saint Wyvin, celebrated for the cure of sore throat, plague, pleurisy, and fever, both in man and beast—and we shall be in reach of rescue, by the valiant arms of the brave baron and the elegant marquess. Yes, yes, Saint Wyvin will take care of us; and what miracle may she not perform! How many are the cancers and quinsies cured by touching her tomb? Did she not drive the devil out of her lover Richward during

her life? and did not the taper of Father Ingelbert light up of itself as he passed by her corpse? Did not Festrode, the crooked tailor of Braine le Duc, grow straight when he crawled to her shrine? Did not sister Marie Elizabeth Jezabel see her carried up to heaven by the angels, on a couch of gold and precious stones? and didn't she cure the eleven cows of Geoffry Coster, the heretic, of Opwycken?* Yes, there at least we shall be safe—and the marquess will soon come, I'll warrant me, to follow up the miracles of the saint."

Madame Marguerite might have run through the whole calendar uninterrupted, while Theresa was occupied as before hinted at; and she did give ample scope to her garrulity, until a propensity of an opposite nature claimed indulgence too, and she fell fast asleep, holding Fanchon securely on her lap. What stoppings or chang-

* For the particulars of these wonders, and many others quite as true, we refer the curious to "The Life and Miracles of St. Wivine," which may be found in some ancient collections in various towns of the Netherlands.

ings, or if any, took place during the remainder of the night, were without the cognizance of the worthy widow, whose example was laudably followed, or imitated, by Nona on the opposite seat : while Theresa, more conscious, but quite as unobserving of all travelling vicissitudes, passed a night of whispering monotony that she then thought the most delicious that even imagination could create. It seemed but almost begun ; the horses feet appeared to have moved in one unchanging track ; all was as though Time had stood still ; when, little by little, the unseen hand that she yet retained in her's assumed an evident shape—the arm grew, as it were, towards the body that gradually became distinct—the beams of two soul-speaking eyes pierced the dusky space beyond the carriage—and the whole animated face and form of her lover was visible, as the infant dawn rose from its cradle of light, and spread its smiles on the awakening earth.

The breath of morning came freshly on Theresa's cheek, and she felt more revived than if she

had slept away the night. She looked out on the young day, and listened to the songs of the birds. She caught the fragrance of the wild flowers as they opened to the breeze. The music, the perfume, the very breath of heaven itself, seemed to enter her heart, and make it instinct with all that is most pure and sweet in Nature.

The little cortège had travelled cautiously by a circuitous route to baffle any attempt at pursuit, and avoid interruption from the patrols of the garrison of Brussels, which were on the alert in certain points of the neighbourhood, and of whose particular positions the apprentice seemed well informed. When day-break surprised the lovers, as we have already related, the litter was ascending the narrow by-road that winds through the wood of Cambre, and over the gentle varieties of hill and valley close to the ancient village of Boetsford. Theresa's eyes rested with a hitherto unknown delight on the beautiful panorama that grew into life under the creative beams of the morn. The horses trod lightly in a path that

wound through fields of uninclosed culture. A rich pastoral landscape was all around. The extensive *Sonien Bosch* bounded the view, as far as the eye could reach, in a magnificent sweep of verdure, in which the perennial shades of the pine trees were relieved by the new-born tints of spring. In the heart of this scene stood Boetsford, with its old grey church, its castle, its farmhouses and cottages of red or white, and its succession of clear lakes, forming so many liquid mirrors, in which the forest branches were reflected, stretching far down into the mimic sky.

Such a view as this was totally new to our heroine, who had been hitherto accustomed to the cheerless and changeless scenery of Flanders. Her mind was in a fitting state to receive the impressions of external nature : at every forward step in these new regions a fresh spring of delight seemed to gush beneath her feet. The wary apprentice took a road that led round the village ; and ere the curiosity of its inhabitants had warning that strangers were passing by, the litter and its escort

were out of the reach of inquiry or observation, and pursuing their route through the forest, towards the hamlet and adjacent priory of Groenendael.* Just at this period, while Theresa was softly murmuring her admiration of the ever shifting beauty of this romantic track, and her companion, still close to her side, leant a keen attention to her vivid expressions of pleasure, Madame Marguerite, Nona, and Fanchon simultaneously awoke, in consequence of a violent jolt given to the litter by its contact with a stump of elm, that projected in the careless grace of nature's mathematics beyond the strict line of road-making precision. The various occupants of the vehicle were flung at random from their places; and as if chance itself had harmonized with love, Theresa was jerked almost over the side, and into the ready arms of the apprentice, who had for some hours walked beside the litter, resigning his horse to the guidance of the man who rode the leading mule.

* The Green Valley.

The exclamations usual on such occasions being over, order was soon restored, and the postilion descended to assist the apprentice in arranging a part of the clumsy cross-bar that had been displaced by the shock. No sooner did Theresa's eyes rest on this man's face, than she started, and a curdling shudder crept through her frame. Why, she could not tell. That she had seen the face before, she was certain. Where, she had not the remotest recollection. The countenance was a foreign one, and evidently disguised; but there was nothing actually bad in its expression. The cause of Theresa's emotion was probably the sensitiveness unusually excited by the late agitating events. Might superstition be taken into account, another solution could be given, and this indefinable dread be attributed to those forebodings of ill, which moral anatomy may dissect, but cannot account for. When the postilion vaulted into his saddle, Theresa gently whispered to the apprentice, who had resumed *his* place,

“Do you know that man?”

“Why? do *you*?” exclaimed the apprentice quickly, and looking fixedly on Theresa.

“Not exactly,” replied she, somewhat confused at his manner,—“but a vague recollection tells me that I have seen his face before, and a still more vague apprehension makes me fear him now.”

“Shake off the prejudice, sweet Theresa, nor cherish groundless fears. The man is honest; I have tried him, and I hold him to me by the strongest tie that can bind man to man—gratitude, my best love.”

This was uttered with that tone of frank conviction that gives to a listener a delightful notion that such a speaker has a generous confidence in his kind which even the winter-blast of experience could not shake. Theresa received this new proof of her lover's good feeling with a sweet satisfaction, and she felt as if she had been unworthy of such a man's regard to remain a moment unconvinced by his example. She conveyed the

sentiment to him by an eloquent look, and then turned to meet the observations which Madame Marguerite began to indulge in.

“ Why—what—how is this—where are we now ?” said the good dame, as she rapidly flounced from side to side in the litter, pushed away the curtains, and popped her head out to the right and left. “ Why, Master Boonen, since you are our guide in this strange and most indecently-executed and uncalled-for removal, is this the road you have taken to Grand Bygard ? Why, by my halidame !—and a solemn oath that is this fine spring morning—if we are not in the heart of the *Sonien Bosch* ! Deny it not, Master Boonen. Though more than twenty years have passed since I traversed this forest, I know it well ; ay, I could almost recognize each individual tree. How is this, Master Boonen ?”

The apprentice briefly explained the motives of his having made so considerable a circuit, and his going now directly south, towards a destination that lay due west ; and he added, that it was his

purpose, with the ladies' approbation, to proceed forthwith to the Priory of Groenendael hard by, and demand from the courtesy of the superior a morning's meal for the whole party.

“ And that we may surely command, Master Boonen, when it is a *De Lovenskerke* that sounds the porter's horn! You know not, perhaps, that it was my noble ancestress *Duchesse Jeanne of Brabant*, who gave, from her sovereign right in this forest, the lands that appertain to this Priory of Groenendael, as well as of the monasteries of Boetendael, Levenborn, and Roo-clooster, near three centuries ago? and here it was that the pious and reverend abbot, *John Curegimus*, ‘the good cook of Affligem,’ when he gave up the kitchen and betook himself to the cloister, made a dying bequest of two hundred Brabant crowns a-year for ever, to secure daily a *matin* meal to the earliest travellers that might ask it. So even if our purses were empty, Master Boonen, we have two good claims on the abbey larder.”

The natural good temper of *Madame Margue-*

rite, strengthened by the sleep she had, with slight interruptions, indulged in all night, was evidently reconciling her to her situation; and the apprentice, by an apparent keenness in relishing her jokes, completely confirmed her return to her natural frame of mind. Just then, a sudden opening in the narrow road, which leads from the skirts of the forest into a space that unites much that is exquisite in scenery, shewed such a burst of natural beauty, that Madame Marguerite loudly exclaimed, while Theresa silently gazed on the scene,

“ Oh, but this glads my heart again ! The young, bright days of youth come back on me once more. The dear friends of early scenes are all before me. The blithesome hours we have spent in this very valley ! the gambols we have indulged in in these beautiful woods ! See there, the long pure lakes that smile so placidly on either side of the road ! Indeed, indeed, it all looks the same as when I passed here my first week of wedded happiness. The very swans that

float there seem unchanged, the old grey abbey mouldering yonder—the royal tree in front, under whose branches Charles the Fifth, the grandfather of our present archduchess, so proudly entertained at dinner six crowned heads ! But oh ! how much less happy were the hearts that sighed under the weight of those diadems, than were mine and my poor dear Ralph's and the glad party that shared our joyous mood ! Alas, for the by-gone days of youth and pleasure ! How fleeting in themselves, yet how indelible in memory !”

This effusion of genuine sensibility was followed by a flood of tears, and the unstudied moral so carelessly thrown out by the speaker, was not lost on the minds of two of the listeners at least.

Just at this point of view, which those who have seen are not likely to forget, and close to an ancient fountain, on the spot where the solitary yet cheerful little inn and toll-house of Groenendael now stands, the driver of the litter stopped suddenly, sprang off his mule, and rapidly

ascended the heath-covered mound on the left-hand side of the road, which commands so beautiful a view into the recesses of the forest that covers with peculiar grace the hills and dales around. No sooner was he on the summit than Theresa heard him utter a wild and plaintive cry, which she immediately recognised as a fragment of a Moorish ditty chanted at times by Beatrice, in suppressed tones, as they wandered in the convent garden at Bruges; and which she had explained to be one of the signal cries of the revolted Moriscoes among the recesses of the Alpuxara hills. This sound, even from Beatrice's voice, had ever produced a painful effect on Theresa, by its sad, yet wild expression. Now it seemed to pierce her like some sharp weapon; she grasped the apprentice's arm, while he answered her look of terror by one of soft inquiry.

“ Oh, Master Boonen,” said she, “ what is the meaning of that sound? It fills me with dread! and this lonely spot—why do we halt here? Prithiee let us on to the priory—why does the driver

quit his mule, and leave us standing here?—my heart misgives me—let us on, let us on!”

“Dearest Theresa, still those causeless fears. Are you not safe with *me*? Have no doubts of our attendant—I know him to be faithful to the core. He comes from a distant country—may not this strain be some religious chaunt sent to the memory of his native land? Cheer up, cheer up, repose with safety on my protection—we shall soon proceed to a place of surety to us all.”

These soothing words were interrupted by a shriek from Madame Marguerite, who, while the others spoke, had been gazing through her tears on the woods beyond, and peopling them with groups of former days.

“Jesu Maria!” exclaimed she, “we are lost! see where they come!” and as she spoke, she burst open the door of the litter, seized Fanchon in her arms, flung herself out, and would have fallen to the ground, had not the apprentice caught her and held her up.

“Oh, let me fly!” cried she, “would you bar-

barously deliver me up to them? Come, Theresa, child, come—let us escape into the forest—do not hold me, Master Boonen, but fly with us if you would yourself be saved!”

Theresa and her lover looked forward on hearing these incoherent words, and saw, indeed, that Madame Marguerite spoke not without cause; the whole side of the hanging wood beyond the causeway and narrow bridge that connected the lakes, seemed alive with men and horses. Armour and lances gleamed in the rays that now darted from the risen sun into the very heart of the forest. The branches shook off the glittering dew showers, as the horsemen dashed through the intricate paths, and came down the hill with fearless rapidity, driving out upon the earth and air several wild boars, foxes and hares, with flocks of singing birds, and their fierce enemies of beak and talons, all of which abounded in those days, though now rarely met with in the *Sonien Bosch*. The squadron of cavaliers thus scattered through the copse soon gained the road, and were forming

into regular line, in obedience to the orders of one whose actions indicated command. Theresa's eyes, though they took in every detail of the scenes were more particularly fixed on the figure of this person. The white plume, the blue scarf, the black armour, half hidden by a short cloak of dark purple, and finally the beautiful Arabian steed, which pranced and bounded under the rider's graceful guidance, convinced her that she gazed on the original of the Márquess of Assembourg's description. A whirlwind of feeling passed through her mind—her head swam round—her heart felt chill, and faintly exclaiming, "It is De Bassenveldt!" she sunk in a paroxysm of emotion on the out-stretched arm that was ready to receive her. The apprentice firmly held up her drooping head, and with his disengaged arm, he closely grasped Madame Marguerite's substantial bulk, preventing an attempt at flight, which he saw to be useless; for in the few moments thus occupied, three or four cavaliers galloped rapidly up to the litter,

the main body remaining on the causeway as they quickly formed into line. At the close by sounds of the horses' hoofs, Theresa revived, and with affrighted stare, she looked on the approaching objects of terror, not however, without a feeling of intense and painful curiosity. To see the person of De Bassenveldt revealed to her—him, whose indelicate boldness had once before, in darkness and mystery, shocked her modesty, and mortified her pride—whose name had since aroused such various emotions—to see him now, in the suddenness of his fierce energy and power, at once excited and appalled her, as one whose eyes are rivetted with fearful interest on the fancied apparition of the dead.

She looked upon the foremost of those who galloped up, but immediately observed that neither the man nor his steed was that which she had fixed on before. But had any doubt existed, it would have been removed by his first words.

“Ladies,” exclaimed he, in imperfect French, reining up his horse, taking off his helmet, and

bowing down to the pommel of his saddle, “ladies, fear nothing at all, for ye are safe, and free from all harm. I am Thaddeus Gallagher, lieutenant in De Bassenveldt’s Black Walloons, and am ordered by Count Ivon himself, our noble colonel, who will be a general ere long, to tell you that he has you under his protection, and is bail for your freedom from harm or hindrance, except that you are prisoners, and must come straight to his Castle of Welbasch, by a little round, to save time and avoid accidents.”

“Oh, the wretch, the wretch! By what pretext does he dare to interrupt two noble ladies of the oldest houses in Flanders?” exclaimed Madame Marguerite. The officer, without paying any attention to the apostrophe, replied,

“The count is well informed of those whom he has the honour, in all humility, to capture as his lawful prizes, by the rules of the highways and of civil war, and he lays himself at the feet of the beautiful Heiress of Bruges, in the profoundest admiration—and well he may call her beautiful,

or my name is not Gallagher—and he means, as you may perceive, ladies, not to approach her in his own proper person, nor to speak one single word to her out of his own mouth, as one might say, until she is safely lodged in his castle; nor even then without her leave, till she pays her own ransom, by throwing herself into his open arms; and it is not the first time—no offence, Mademoiselle—that those arms of his were the refuge of beauty and virtue.”

The blush of self-reproach which rose to Theresa's cheeks was chased away by a smile, equally involuntary, at the gallant turn which the Irishman, either by design or accident, gave to the questionable remark.

“And the count commands me also to say,” continued he, “that out of respect to the lovely Mademoiselle Van Rozenhoed, her escort here, this quiet and peaceable-looking young gentleman, may go about his business wherever he likes; while, as for this old lady, whose name has slipped my memory—”

“ Oh, Master Boonen, can you bear this ?” interrupted Madame Marguerite ; “ have you no blood to boil up at these indignities and to be shed in our defence ? Is this the way you do your duty, and protect us ? Is a De Lovenskerke to meet with slight and contumely on the very grounds of her ancestors, and no sword be drawn to avenge her ? Why, Master Boonen, do you not pull your blade from its scabbard, and die fighting for me and my hapless young kinswoman ?”

“ In sooth, Madam,” said the apprentice, “ I would cheerfully lay down my worthless life to do her service ; but methinks that may be better now effected by a living friend than a dead man : I therefore let my sword lie still ; and implore ye both, sweet ladies, to consider that the unpractised arm of one civilian could but little avail in a conflict with numerous trained soldiers such as these. Submission is a duty where resistance is hopeless ; and in urging ye to meet this calamity with patient

courage, I humbly devote myself to your bidding, be that what it may."

"Devote yourself, indeed!" bitterly cried Madame Marguerite, "and is this what you call devotion? Aye, so it may be in the notions of a Boonen! But, alas! how different are those of high birth and chivalry! How would one of noble blood have thrown his body as a rampart before us, to be hacked and trampled on by swords and hoofs! oh, were but the gallant Baron de Roulemonde here, or the marquess! alas, alas! not one to break a lance for two ladies of birth and quality!"

These lamentations would have amused Theresa, had not a rapid mixture of more serious thoughts assailed her. Shocked as she was at the picture of self-destruction sketched by Madame Marguerite, she could not resist a feeling of shame and mortification at beholding the calm and somewhat craven deportment of the apprentice, under circumstances that would, she thought, have aroused every spirited and generous feeling, and made him

even rush on desperation. At the same moment an involuntary impulse turned her looks again towards the distant group of cavaliers ; and as the figure of their leader was evident in the light and graceful movements of horsemanship, an irresistible and painful comparison forced itself on her mind ; and her heart sunk at the conviction that Lambert Boonen seemed an extinguished light in the very gleam of contact with Ivon de Bassenveldt.

The apprentice, as if reading her inmost thoughts, fixed his eyes piercingly on her ; and then, in that peculiar tone which never failed to soften Theresa's most stubborn thoughts, he said,

“ Is it then your pleasure that I lay down my life now, or that I reserve the sacrifice until it may be wisdom and not wantonness ? ”

“ Oh, Master Boonen, talk not so ; you make my blood curdle. Your life is *my* life. I throw myself wholly upon you. Do not abandon me ! ”

“ You have but to speak the word. I am free, this officer says ; but only free to be your slave. Whither shall I go, Theresa ? ”

“ Will you not go where I must go? Could you wilfully trust me in the keeping of him I dread the most on earth?”

“ Theresa, hearken to me! Fate itself seems to mark thee for De Bassenveldt. Thou lovest me, I believe—but tell me truly, dost thou not, even now, feel a secret throb that beats in unison with Count Ivon’s hopes? Do not the prince’s overtures, thy father’s wishes, thine own occult desires, all join together—and may the poor claims of such a one as I contest the palm with *him*? Can love withstand opposing influences like these?”

“ Probe not my heart by such questioning—I cannot answer thee. In the tempest of my feelings for days past, I am tost upon an ocean of doubt and temptation. I know not my own mind—but my heart has never swerved from its course. I can say no more. Be generous, and ask no further avowal of weakness from me. If there be danger to my faith, oh, stay by me in the hour of trial; the dread of losing thy support half kills me. Oh, in pity, do not leave me to this lawless liber-

tine ! Come with me to his haunt. He seems to mean us fair ; and I trust that this hapless connection with my poor father, may at least procure safety for all attached to him."

"Thy will, Theresa, is my law. I will not quit thee. And, trust me, thy solicitude to soothe me into courage is not lost on me. Yet know me better. I do not fear De Bassenveldt. If common belief speak truth, he is not ungenerous at least ; and the prince's friendship for thy father will ensure our honourable treatment. Now, Sir Lieutenant, we are ready to proceed. I bear these ladies escort to their destination, claiming meet treatment for their sex and quality to the issue of this misadventure."

Lieutenant Gallagher, who had during the preceding colloquy offered no interruption, but rather courteously appeared to remove any, by holding Madame Marguerite in discourse, now spoke again—

"Young gentleman, make yourself easy on that head. The honour of De Bassenveldt might

have answered your demand without giving you the trouble of asking it. I hope, ladies, you fear nothing further?"

"Indeed, Theresa dear," said Madame Marguerite, considerably mollified by some honied speeches made by Lieutenant Gallagher while the apprentice and our heroine had conversed together, "indeed it may be well that we have fallen into such hands as we have done. This gallant gentleman promises all honour on the part of Count Ivon; and he tells me the whole country is alive with revolt, that the peasantry are up, the image breakers again abroad, and the horrid Martin Schenck ravaging in all directions, from Bommel to Brussels. We may thank the saints to have 'scaped worse hap, and chanced on chivalrous captors. A Bassenveldt will not belie his blood, I'll warrant him; and though I know nothing positively of the Gallaghers, this officer seems of no ignoble race. Cheer up, then, child, and wait patiently for the succour which is sure to be brought to us by the baron and the marquess. This adventure

will end well, after all, or I am much mistaken."

During this speech, Madame Marguerite, assisted by the apprentice, reseated herself in the litter, and seemed in a moment as unruffled as if nothing had disturbed the course of her good humour. Gallagher had galloped off towards the group of horsemen; and Theresa's eyes followed him, as he saluted and conversed a moment or two with the chief, and then returned at full speed; the driver of the litter having meanwhile put fresh mules into its shafts, and taken his place again. Theresa shuddered anew as she remarked him; and she softly said to the apprentice, who still stood by her side,

"Were, then, my misgivings groundless? Have we not been betrayed?"

"That is a harsh word, Theresa; we must not say *betrayed* till better proof is given us."

"Has that man a sister?"

"He has told me as much."

"I know him, then, indeed! And my heart

sinks with a fresh cause of dread. Oh, much I fear a deep snare has been laid for us. A sudden light seems to break on me. A darker passion still than man's desire works me this peril. Woman's jealousy has plotted to entrap me within the reach of vengeance. Yet Heaven knows I seek no rivalry with her! Tell me, Master Boonen, where, when, and how long have you known that dangerous Moor, for such I now recognize him to be?"

"Nay, dearest, that would now be a long tale. Some other time thou shalt know how I met him, and the ties that bind him to me. But now I cannot even ask thee to explain those vague hints of mysteries I may not divine. Here comes this lieutenant back. We must now bear up for the scenes that lie reserved to try our fortitude—and our *faith*, Theresa. Whatever trials await to put us to the test, on one point rest secure. As long as life beats in my bosom, I am thine. No peril shall reach thee that does not first pass over me. Thy weal is my first object. To watch

by thee, until Heaven, thine own choice, and thy father's consent unite to make thee mine for ever, or till thine own lips reject me for another—”

“ Oh, Master Boonen, say not that cruel and dishonouring word ! I swear—”

“ Thou shalt *not*, dearest—I will not bind thee by a pledge. I and my destiny are yet a mystery to thee—and never will I join thee in bonds of darkness. The cup of fate is fast filling for me. Though ruin be within it I will drain it to the dregs, so thou sharest it not. And were it brimmed with glory, I would dash it from my lips if thou mayst not partake it !—Well, lieutenant, let's on ! These ladies are now quite ready, and I, their poor servitor. To horse, and away.”

While Theresa listened with surprised delight to these spirited words, Lieutenant Gallagher looked on the apprentice with a smile, and replied,

“ Upon the honour of the Gallaghers, young gentleman, it's a pity you were not our commander instead of our captive. But you must let me put you in the right road. Just mount your

horse—it is Count Ivon de Bassenveldt's pleasure that you accompany these ladies, as he finds it is theirs."

"Really, for my part," exclaimed Madame Marguerite, "I see no use in Master Boonen's services, since we are under the protection of the noble Count Ivon—"

"Madame Marguerite," said Theresa, with the calm and resolute air in which she always received the good lady's suggestions, "it appears to me needful for our honour's sake that my father's friend and representative, Master Boonen, quit us not. May we now proceed, Sir, on this forced journey? We are ready, all."

"Assuredly, Mademoiselle; and you may take my word that Count Ivon will not separate you from Master Boonen. He has too much—"

"Allow me to say, Sir," interrupted the apprentice somewhat sternly, "that this lady requires no expounding of motives. Let us proceed. Observe you that your troop and its commander are moving on?"

“ Upon my word, Sir, for a goldbeater’s boy, you have a very pretty notion of commanding an old soldier,” said Gallagher, with another smile, that appeared to our sensitive heroine most imper-
tinent-ly contemptuous; and she listened in no very gracious mood to the Irishman as he addressed her and pointed towards the distant troop, which filed away into the forest road.

“ You see, Mademoiselle, our noble colonel takes care to keep himself in the place he thinks you like him to hold. He orders me to tell you that on your arrival at Welbasch—which may it please the blessed St. Patrick you will one day be mistress of!—you will meet with a hearty welcome, in all delicacy and honour, from an old and sure friend.”

“ Delicacy and honour!” murmured Theresa, blushing deep with resentment at this allusion to Beatrice; but Gallagher took no heed, and continued,

“ And now, ladies, I must most dutifully bid ye farewell, wishing ye a safe journey and the

best of good luck. I am now going to gallop with these two fine dragoons up to the very gates of Brussels, that is to say, within a bow's shot of the walls, which will be a good long distance too, for Joos Teckman here will, for a wager, send an arrow from his arbalet as far as the famous flight of Peter d'Assche's, from the ramparts to Scheut-Veld Chapel.* And on the shaft of that very arrow there, Mademoiselle, which this same Joos Teckman holds in his hand, you may see fastened the letter that we go to shoot into the heart of the city, announcing that you are safe, and warning the archduke that if one hair is turned crooked on your worshipful father's head, the head of the Provost of Flanders, now a hostage at Welbasch Castle, shall be twisted straight on his shoulders for the same. So have no fear of danger to your parent, for Count Ivon's name is signed to the

* This spot, called still "the Scheut," is at such a distance from the ramparts of Brussels as tempts one to suspect that the chroniclers who record the feat, are themselves no mean performers on the weapon they celebrate.

notice, and he is a man not to be trifled with ; for which reason, seeing that he is in a hurry, no more at present from your humble servant, ladies, but a hearty welcome at Welbasch, and good husbands, and soon, and plenty of them !—Whoop ! —Bassenveldt —a-boo !—Forward, my boys, and heigh for Brussels !”

With one of those wild yells, and an incomprehensible war cry in his native language, which distinguished the Irish auxiliaries found serving in those days in all the armies of Europe, Gallagher dashed away, followed close by his two stalwart dragoons, and they were in a minute out of sight in the forest. Theresa could not help gazing after them with a mixture of admiration and pity, as she considered the perilous errand they were about to undertake ; and she listened to the sounds of their horses’ feet on the causeway, and shuddered to think that it was on her account those brave men were galloping to probable destruction. A quick association of thought presented De Bassenveldt to her mind, in the triple light of ardour,

delicacy, and generosity, all exemplified, as she felt, in his way of conducting his present enterprise.

No sooner had she conceived this thought than she strove to force it from her mind, her jealousy being again aroused by this involuntary bias towards the apprentice's formidable rival; and her heart sank as she hurriedly pictured her present situation, and the imminent danger into which she had drawn her lover. The entreaty that he would fly, and abandon her to her fate, seemed quivering for utterance on her lips; but the dread that he would attribute it to some hidden influence connected with his late questions relative to De Bas-senveldt, seemed to strike her dumb.

The few minutes that elapsed while the litter moved slowly on across the bridge, and up the open road that led into the forest, were minutes of agitation almost unequalled in all the varied anxieties which had yet assailed Theresa. But they soon subsided into a state of solemn happiness. She could not blind herself to the existence of

the favourable impression made on her by De Bassenveldt's whole character and conduct, save in one solitary instance. This very seizure of her person, so cleverly accomplished, be the agency what it might, was, in the spirit of the times and of Theresa's romantic disposition, an event irresistibly pleasing and impressive. His chivalrous forbearance in keeping aloof from her, his energetic interference in her father's behalf, his bravery, his proscription, and Prince Maurice's friendship for him, all combined to excite her admiration. But there was one more deep buried feeling in her breast, unknown to her, yet working towards the same end, in sure and silent effect, like the earth-fires that send up their heat from the heart of a volcanic mountain, to melt the snows upon its surface. This feeling is hard to be described, and most hard to be conceived by bosoms that beat like Theresa's, in a purity so perfect as not to comprehend their own workings. It was engendered in the one wild moment when De Bassenveldt clasped her to him in that impassioned and unhallowed em-

brace, which seemed, by a power of nature more potent than cold decorum, to have endowed her with a mysterious sympathy—a yearning to see, in the broad light of truth and virtue, the being whom she had only known in gloom and guilt.

Such was the spell that did such secret service to the cause of De Bassenveldt. Had she known its nature she would have loathed herself, albeit most unjustly. As it was, she was at times startled, but not alarmed, to perceive her own leaning towards him whom she fancied she abhorred. But she never for a moment supposed that a rebel feeling lurked within her heart, to tamper with the allegiance it had so devoutly sworn to Lambert Boonen.

For hour after hour the cavalcade proceeded on its route; through the depths of the *Sonien Bosch*, across the broad plains of Waterloo, which had not yet been dyed with the blood-red tints of immortality, and passed the Sambre uninterrupted. Two stoppages, for refreshment sake, took place during the day; and long ere its

close, the banks of the Meuse were gained, and Welbasch Castle high in view, towering in placid pride over the enchanting scenery spread far beneath its rocky basement.

During the whole of this day, Theresa's mind, uninterrupted by any external excitement, heaved in the tumult of self-impelled emotion, like the sea that swells during the profoundest calm, from the intensity of its own depth. Madame Marguerite's was as still and smooth as the shallow pool, that stands like transparent marble when no breeze ruffles its surface. She, in losing sight of the scenes that had excited her warm-watery feelings, relapsed into her usual mood of indolent content, and caressing Fanchon or chattering to Nona, she left Theresa to the indulgence of her own thoughts. And never had our heroine enjoyed such a combination of happy sensations as on that day. The troop of horsemen kept far in front, and its leader took especial care not to intrude on Theresa's presence. The momentary shudder of dread for her lover's safety was succeeded by a

sentiment of profound security both for him and herself. A double delight (yet she knew not that it was so) filled her heart. Lambert Boonen was by her side. De Bassenveldt's imagined portrait was in her mind. A real and a fancied presence at once possessed her. She revelled in the rapturous union of fact and fiction. Every thought of danger or difficulty was absorbed. Her father's safety seemed as certain as her own. Lambert Boonen's love, De Bassenveldt's glory, her country's triumph, her own happiness, were the blended colours of the arch that spanned her imagined heaven ; and she might as vainly have essayed to separate or define them, as might mortal vision the prismatic fiction that bends across the sky.

No teasing attentions, the marks of frivolous attachments, broke in on Theresa's mood. The apprentice rode quietly beside her, dropped behind at times, or now and then moved forwards ; occasionally conversed with the cavaliers that formed the front and rear guards, and again, for long intervals, lapsed into silent inactivity. But he

was never out of Theresa's sight. Yet even had she lost his view, she had not been alarmed ; for she felt her spirit as indissolubly joined with his as are the invisible elements of nature with each other. She asked no more. When the apprentice did address her it was ever in some forcible phrase of tenderness and love ; and in the apparent absence of anxiety for his own fate, in circumstances which might well have aroused it to excess, Theresa saw a deeper community of feeling than even yet had been evident between them. In the indulgence of sweet reveries, she passed the day ; traversed the beautiful scenes which the route presented ; saw the embattled fortress, which she looked on less as a prison than a home ; nor felt one moment's check to this delicious flow of thought, till Madame Marguerite, after gazing awhile alternately at the castle and the apprentice, who rode somewhat in advance of the litter, abruptly yet quietly exclaimed, in her commonplace tone—

“ Theresa, love, do you know I think I have

discovered a secret ! I am sure, and I stake my faith on the fact, that Master Boonen has betrayed us into the hands of Count Ivon de Bassenveldt.”

Imagination may fancy the pang that shoots through him who receives a serpent's tooth—the numbness which succeeds the sudden sting—the insensibility as the poison spreads. Such were the gradations of suffering that now assailed Theresa. The cavalcade had reached the river's edge. The trumpets flourished, and the cannons roared. The stream was safely passed, the castle portals entered : the utmost state exhibited to give an air of triumph to the scene—the whole power of De Bassenveldt displayed before her—the tenderest assiduities of Lambert Boonen poured into her ear; but Theresa made her entry into this late-considered home, surrounded by every vassal circumstance of homage, as morally dead to all around as though her corpse had been carried to its tomb.

CHAPTER III.

ENTHUSIASTIC shouts in various languages of “A Bassenveldt !” “Count Ivon for ever !” “Liberty !” and the like, fell on Theresa’s ear with a stunning sound, as the litter slowly entered the castle courts ; and hundreds of armed men appeared on all sides, thus boisterously hailing the return of their chieftain, the champion of that cause for which they were irrevocably pledged. The excitement of revolt had reached its highest pitch ; and the regiment was roused to actual fury, on hearing of the indignity offered to their colonel by his being hung in effigy, and of the

violent decree of proscription issued by the archduke against him and his followers, which intelligence had been promptly conveyed from Brussels the previous day. The garrison of Welbasch was now complete, by the return of De Bassenveldt with the large detachment that had been for several days hovering round Brussels and carrying defiance to its very gates ; and they vociferated as with a single voice their desperate greetings, to him with whom they now entered on a struggle that they knew was to be of life or death.

In the midst of these reiterated shouts, the voice of the apprentice continued its efforts to assuage what appeared to him Theresa's terror at the scene. He knew not how her feelings would have sympathized with it, had they not been thus temporarily paralyzed. When she fully recovered her consciousness and self-command, she found herself, as she then deeply felt, utterly desolate ; for the apprentice had left her side, and followed the persons who presented themselves to him, as guides to scenes which her bewildered

imagination could only vaguely picture but dared not attempt to define. When the litter had stopped, Theresa had mechanically followed Madame Marguerite's movements, and descended under the porch of the gothic arch, that led to the principal apartments of the castle. The apprentice's hand had aided her till she touched the ground, and just then he disappeared—recalling her to sensation by the very act of quitting her, and giving her mind free scope to understand the delusion under which it had suffered.

While Madame Marguerite busily and joyously entered into conversation with Father Jerome, the chaplain, who hurried to the porch accompanied by some female attendants and several of the males of the household, to do due honour to the ladies, Theresa cast a searching glance through the groups around her. The apprentice as he disappeared seemed to remove the spell that his presence had imposed upon her; and her next object of scrutiny was to discover De Bassenveldt's figure, that she might at once throw herself upon his

generosity, and intercede for the honorable treatment of him whom she had been the means of bringing into this peril: for, as the goblin lights of swamp and vapour expire in the first rays of morning, so did the agony of doubt that had flitted across her mind, vanish in the dawn of returning reason. A quick transition of feeling sped through her mind. She saw, as by inspiration, the injustice of her temporary dread—and, for the instant, she scarcely knew which most to despise or hate the weakness that allowed her to be the dupe of Madame Marguerite's ignoble suspicion.

She could not succeed in discovering any one on whom she could fix as Count Ivon, amid the scattered throng that filled the courts; and as she recovered her self-possession, she was delighted to have been thus saved from the indignity of verbal supplication, which would at once have degraded and betrayed her. She calmly followed the invitation to enter, courteously made by the chaplain; and her mind gra-

dually became more collected as she saw the delicacy of her reception. She and Madame Marguerite were ushered into one of the vaulted and gloomy rooms of state, while her worthy chaperone seemed as usual to have alighted in the very place that suited her best, like (not profanely speaking) the animal of seven lives that is sure to fall on its legs—and gave fluent vent to her delight at the honours paid her. Theresa was spared the thick-coming anxieties which inaction in such a situation must have generated, by an announcement from Trinette (the modest handmaid of Beatrice) that her mistress was in readiness to wait upon her as soon as she was disposed to receive her.

Theresa was taken by surprise, and a shudder of repugnance crept through her; but she promptly saw the necessity of submitting to circumstances; and she wished rather to hasten the meeting, which would enable her to appease the jealousy of which she suspected she was the victim, by a full avowal of her love for the appren-

tice. She would thus, she felt sure, at once remove the source of distrust in Beatrice and of danger to Lambert Boonen, and also satisfy her own mind as to the real character of De Bassenveldt. Other hopes were linked with this ; the chief one was that of obtaining through Beatrice, means of escape for herself and her lover. All this passed with magic rapidity through her brain ; and she returned a message urging Beatrice's instant visit, ere the simple Trinette perceived that she had cogitated on the proposal.

At the announced approach of Beatrice, the pious horror of Madame Marguerite was raised to the utmost. She demanded of Father Jerome to be led instantly to her chamber ; and hurried off, with Nona by her side, and Fanchon in her arms, muttering prayers for Theresa's preservation from the contagion she was about to risk. As she bustled through an outlet at one end of the state chamber, she heard another door at the opposite end creak on its huge hinges ; and not daring to look back, lest the figure of the pol-

luted novice should blast her sight, she suppressed a rising scream, and banged the oaken barrier behind her, with a noise that pealed through the lofty saloons and corridors.

Theresa, left alone in the spacious and gloomy chamber, but half distinct in the dusky twilight, started as she heard these desolate reverberations, and a chilling dread crept through her. She listened to the noise of the door through which she expected Beatrice to enter, as it was opened and then closed again ; and she felt as though it were impossible to raise her eyes to the then degraded being she had so long known in virtue.

By a strong exertion of the will, in which pride was the chief element, she recovered her self-possession, and looked up. But a pang of surprise and terror struck on her, at seeing before her, instead of the well known commanding figure of her former friend, in the characteristic costume of her sex, a person in male attire, of middle stature, and dressed in the full semblance of military life. Theresa would have fled—but the hopelessness of

escape made her on the instant determine to meet the fate she could not successfully shun; and perhaps a half-formed notion urged her not to shrink from an interview with De Bassenveldt, who, she had no doubt, now stood revealed in his own person before her. With one hand supported on a marble table placed in the middle of the room, and the other on her throbbing heart, she drew herself proudly up, and stood prepared for results which she had neither power to controul, nor time to calculate.

The figure stopped, and stood with hands extended in a gesture of mingled doubt and supplication, and the following words broke on Theresa's ear.

“Do you not know me, Theresa? Or do you shrink from and shun my open arms? Does the memory of our last embrace in the convent garden awaken a new dread in you?”

It was indeed Beatrice who spoke these words, in tones which instantaneously quieted our heroine's alarm, yet, at the same time, made her bosom sink,

with that sensation of void that accompanies the disappointment of even undefined desires.

“ You know me not yet, Theresa ?” continued the modern amazon. “ Is my voice, too, changed, as well as my attire ? Can you not recognize your old friend Beatrice in the disguise of manhood ? Ah ! yes—that glance speaks volumes — you know—you fear—and you despise me ! Is it not so ?”

“ I do at last recognize her who was my associate and my friend,” replied Theresa, recovering her calm and somewhat proud demeanour—“ let your own heart, if it be not, like your person, changed from nature’s design, answer the rest.”

“ Theresa, mark my words—and look full upon my face to see that my looks belie them not. There’s nought to fear in me, and nothing to despise—had there been such, thou hadst not seen me here. Let our conference begin as it ought to do. We must know each other—thou hast much to learn, but little to tell me ; for methinks I read thy inmost thoughts this moment.”

Beatrice, while speaking these words, advanced close to Theresa, and removed the plumed cap that had shaded her face. Theresa's eyes, as if moved by irresistible command, were raised upon the countenance that at once courted her scrutiny and returned it, with a glance that seemed to penetrate her soul. She saw in the lofty bearing of the quondam novice an expression of high-wrought enthusiasm, such as she had not ever imagined, much less met with. But it was quite free from the tone of cold assurance, which is often seen in faces of loveliness that are joined with profligate minds and passionless hearts. The eyes of Beatrice swam while they beamed. Her brow was flushed, her lips quivered. Emotion spoke in all those eloquent signs; and Theresa could scarcely believe that she gazed on a being moved solely by mortal impulses.

“Yes,” continued Beatrice, “I know what passes in thy mind—but I must undeceive thee. I love thee, Theresa, and have no rivalry with thee. And, trust me, thou mayest safely love me

as of old, despite my male attire and my apparent abandonment of what the world calls virtue. Sit down, sit down, and calmly listen, while I open before thee a speaking leaf in the book of human nature."

With these words she laid her hand on Theresa's arm, with an air of gentle authority which the latter felt no wish to resist, for every look of Beatrice quieted her alarm and excited her curiosity. They sat down together on a huge bench, unbacked and cushionless, the general style of the antique furniture of Welbasch Castle. Yet, as our heroine gazed on her companion's face, she was awed by its highly excited expression; and she could not repress a lingering shudder, as she marked her military accoutrements and masculine attitude. She could scarcely believe she sat beside a woman, until Beatrice again spoke.

"Theresa, I read thy repugnance to my present state and demeanour. Nay, speak not, but hear me! In one word, then—I am as pure as when I first met thee in the convent parlour. Nothing

has taken place to bar my privilege of sex ; and may this sacred symbol of my race bear witness that I wear it undefiled."

She here threw open her doublet and exposed the curiously-wrought cestus that girded her waist, marked with mystic characters unknown to our heroine, who had, however, more faith in the eloquent veracity of Beatrice's look, than in the mysterious voucher she invoked.

" Thus much," continued the latter, " I have said to calm thy scruples, but I scorn to profess them as my own. No ! my mind was not cast in the mould of prejudice. It is free as the winds. It knows no limits, and obeys no laws but its own impulses. It holds no code for its own movements apart from the body it is linked with. As the affections and the person are inseparate, so should they be given together. This is not womanly in the notions of the world, nor in thine, Theresa ; but the rigid fools who legislate for the free will of mankind, know not the very elements they would fashion into systems. They draw distinctions of

humanity, as if the mind knew differences of sex. They form one code for man, another for woman, as if genders were of the spirit, not the body.—Fools in their own conceit ! they would circumscribe the unlimited, unfathomable soul. Young and innocent as thou art, Theresa, thou mayst not comprehend one theory of would-be wise ones ; philosophers, forsooth, who prate of woman's nature. They say, that baulked and thwarted in her love, she hates the object that excited it, and that vengeance thrusts affection from her bosom. Gross libellers of the female heart—how little do they know it ! Listen to me, Theresa,—I loved, adored De Bassenveldt, when in a pilgrim's guise he came into our convent, marked me for his object, and won my heart and soul by the irresistible powers that no woman may withstand. Nay, start not, nor blush, Theresa ; one day thou wilt acknowledge this. He won me, wholly, unreservedly ;—I was his, without restriction or condition.”

“ Oh, Beatrice ! ”

“Hush ! not a word of interruption ; I cannot afford a moment’s loss of time, in laying bare the secret workings of this breast. In space less long than other men might take to form a project on the heart, this man, Theresa, had wooed and won one that, methinks, is made of stuff less yielding than is common. None other possesses influence like this.”

Theresa felt her bosom throb with a consciousness that gave the lie to this assertion ; but she gave no interruption to Beatrice.

“Devoted to him as I was, knowing as I did, from his manly confession, that he had vowed himself to another, that he could never be my husband, I threw myself on his protection, and fled from the thralldom to which the villain Trovaldo had doomed me—from the mockery of a religion repugnant to my nature ; but I forbear to shock thee. I fled in the full excitement of the belief that De Bassenveldt’s breast was to pillow my own. I deny it not ; and were it required of me, I could justify, at least to my own conscience,

a doctrine from which you, Theresa, revolt and shrink. But my destiny was other than my own impetuous passions longed for; and the magnanimity of him I fled with, gave me a higher doom than the love-sick voluptuousness into which I was prepared to melt. It is true that De Bassenveldt had spoken to me in the language of passion, and gained me for his own, by an impetuous approach to a heart undefended by any barriers of opposing principle or repellant scruple. I scorn to assume a virtue (if it be one) that I have not. De Bassenveldt's first designs were what the parlance of the world calls libertine—and he met a sympathy in the full throbbings of my ready heart. He was the first man I had loved—and when I say the first, I imply that he was the only one; for apart from theories of the affections, or problems as to their extent, of this be assured, that she who loves De Bassenveldt—and to know him is to love him—can never love another. There is a magic in him, Theresa, that cannot be resisted; not that which drivelling dolts, like our good chaplain here,

believe in, but that magic of a mind which, self-impelled, bears down all obstacles—that magic of a heart swelling with passionate ardour—that will to do, which is the power of doing—that mighty combination of courage, warmth, and energy, which master-spirits alone possess, and which lesser beings bend to, as the forest branches to the rushing breath of heaven: such is De Bassenveldt.”

As Beatrice spoke, her eyes beamed with enthusiasm; but Theresa detected none of the tenderness of affection, such as moistened her own eyes or dissolved her heart. She could not help being carried onwards by the glow of her companion’s words; but she still seemed to shrink into herself at the picture of awful power possessed by that man, in whose grasp she felt as if girded.

“To such a being as this,” continued Beatrice, “I confided myself. With him I spurned, as you saw me, the convent laws and limits; and, when free from pursuit and persecution, I sighed for the indulgence of the passion I had at once nourished and lived on. Then it was that the

splendour of his character broke forth, and awoke in mine feelings and principles that were less ingenerate than the work of his power. His genius breathed on me, and called a full creation into life. He had never talked to me in puling phrase, nor wooed me with sighs and tears ; but his every word revealed high thoughts and aspirations, as stars that are discovered by the heaven-seers through the separate streams of their own light. He had thus prepared me for what, in a meaner mood of mind, had been a shock, but which, sublimed as I was, was like a transfiguration from earth to immortality. In one word, Theresa, he saved me from myself ; spared me in the moment of his triumph ; and instead of sinking me below the level of my nature, he raised me high into the atmosphere of his own. But oh ! how describe the gentle energy with which he checked my feelings, and turned them into a current of elevated passion ! instead of a harsh revulsion, changing heart and mind into bitterness, sensations and sentiments all expanded beneath his management,

and became etherealized into an incense worthy of the idol before whom they rose. In that hour of ordeal, through which I came refined and regenerate, I devoted myself to nobler purposes than self-indulgence. It was then I vowed my life and energies to the two great objects of De Bassenveldt's existence. Thine eyes, Theresa, ask me what were those?—thy heart anticipates and throbs to meet the answer. They were the deliverance of his country, and the possession of *thy* heart and person. Heaven's hand is working for the one, and manifold human means are labouring to secure the other. Brabant may yet be free; and Theresa Van Rozenhoed *must* be the wife of De Bassenveldt!"

"Oh, Beatrice, in mercy, in pity, spare me!" cried our heroine, grasping in her hands the arm that had half encircled her as Beatrice pronounced her last oracular sentence. "Oh, if thy heart be indeed what thy tongue bespeaks it,—if thy woman's nature be not wholly changed, be not accessory to so cruel a doom towards one who has

done thee no wrong—one who supplicates thy protection. Good Heavens! what a fate is mine! Day after day betrayed, entrapped into dangers and doomed to despair—victim of the bold designs of men who find too ready instruments in my own sex for my undoing! Oh save me from this dangerous man! I tremble at the bare thought of encountering him. I at once admire and dread him. I follow his high destiny with wondering eyes, but dare not mingle myself with it.”

“It is thine own, Theresa. Nature and fate have marked thee for De Bassenveldt, and him for thee. Ye move in the same course, on to the same goal. He has stamped his influence on thee beyond the power of change. The surest authority that can speak to thee, thine own heart, must tell thee this; and even couldst thou escape from it, thou wouldst not!”

These words seemed to penetrate the depth of Theresa’s soul, and to hold up a mirror to her mind. She could not deny the reality so visibly reflected; and she started back with affright at

the apparition thus magically conjured up. Every thing seemed conspiring against her. Her father, the prior, Prince Maurice, Beatrice, all who had most influence on her—save one—and he?—Was she sure of him?

“Beatrice, Beatrice,” she exclaimed, “I supplicate you by all you hold sacred and dear, to deliver me from this peril. My whole resource is in you. I comprehend the high-wrought feelings you have explained, and by which you are bound to Count Ivon; and thinking of him as you do, you may well suppose you act for my good in lending yourself to his designs. But our cases are widely different. I look on him with awe and terror. I own his power, and feel it wound round me in many a subtle link, but I have no sympathy with what I am thus joined to. Besides, Beatrice, you will remember you confessed to me, even ere you quitted the convent, that De Bassenveldt was vowed to another.”

“And wert not *thou* that other, Theresa? Was it not to *thee* that he had vowed himself? Not by

the gossamer pledge of words, but in the solitude of his own soul—in the solemn depths of passion ! Was it not thy reputed charms that first led him to our convent walls—and was it not my close intimacy with thee that fixed his thoughts on me ? And, oh power of holy love ! was it not thou that worked such mighty influence in his breast, turning its fiery torrents into pure and limpid streams ! Was it not thou, Theresa, who, by the passive magic of thy virtue, transformed De Bassenveldt at once from the loose libertine he was, to the high-toned hero that he is ? Was it not thou who madest him win that victory from himself, when I, in the rapturous warmth of woman's love, tempted and tried him to the core ? Yes, this was all thy doing ; and by this thou hast, all unconscious of thy power, raised two beings above their several natures. I say no more of what De Bassenveldt is,—and thou mayest see and judge *me* for thyself. Yet know my outward seeming does not mock my inward soul—for in the critical hour when De Bassenveldt told me he was thine, and

proved to me it was thy power o'er him that engendered his forbearance to me, I made a deep and never to be forgotten vow of celibacy, not forced and false to woman's nature, but genuine, I hope, and generous. I had cast the outward covering of this form, and swore never again to clothe it in a woman's garb, till thou wert *his*, and Brabant free! A solemn oath, Theresa, taken before the shrine of a pure conscience, and registered in its inviolate resolves."

"Beatrice, Beatrice, all this is too much for me. I am overwhelmed by the rushing flood of circumstances. A fearful thrill moves through me. Were it mere terror, I could hope to shake it off—but, Heaven forgive me! I fear that delight is mingled with alarm. I cannot be ungrateful for, nor feign insensibility to Count Ivon's passion—and was ever so strange a cause so strongly pleaded? How am I to resist this combination, and hold firm in my deep-pledged faith! For know, Beatrice, my secret must burst from me—know that another—"

“ Hush, hush, Theresa, nor murmur treason to the sovereign destiny that rules thee. I cannot list to aught that thou wouldst utter more. Thou art not here to battle with thy doom, but to fulfil it—nor I to have my mission thwarted or opposed. Fear nought, Theresa, a guardian power is over thee. Let no unseemly doubts assail thee. All will be well. De Bassenveldt is no common man, nor will he travel even to his own happiness, by beaten ways. His thou must be, and his by his own means. Soon thou wilt see him in his true light. But until he throws himself before thee, in his own time, let no distorting colouring picture him as he is not. See every act of his, as well devised and executed for thy good.”

“ My forcible seizure and present imprisonment?”

“ To save thee from power and treachery. Here thou art safe from every harm that touches not De Bassenveldt’s self.”

“ Beatrice, thou said’st *treachery*. To whom did that foul word point? Twice already within

two days has its sting pierced through me. What treachery am I saved from, in being trepanned to this strong hold of peril?"

"At least from that of thine own fears, and doubts, and phantasies, Theresa—let that answer suffice thee. Be tranquillized and happy. Thy father's safety is guaranteed. Thou art in the keeping of all that is brave and honourable. Thou shalt have all that tender friendship and exalted love can give thee—protection, and indulgence to thy heart's most ample wish."

"Beatrice, thou hast rejoiced my soul, for thine own sake, but shaken it to its very base for mine; and there is one unnamed by thee for whom I tremble still. Let me but be assured that my father's friend—and mine—is safe, and will remain so, and I can bear aught that may befall or is intended me."

"Follow me, Theresa, and see to his safety with thine own eyes."

With these words, Beatrice rose from her seat,

placed her plumed *Montero* on her head, and holding her light rapier up to prevent its trailing on the floor, she moved across the apartment with measured strides, Theresa following, in that mood of uneasy and half fearful admiration with which children gaze on the disguises of a carnival.

Following the route taken by Madame Marguerite and her reverend conductor, our heroine was now led through sundry ante-rooms, saloons and corridors to the grand staircase of the castle. As Beatrice ascended the broad marble steps, her spurs and iron-shod boots caused the only sounds that broke the stillness of the castle, for not even a straggling servant appeared ; and all the bustle and noise of the garrison seemed concentrated in the courts without, the rude clamours of which were distinctly heard through the massive walls. Beatrice stopped on the first landing-place, from which various passages branched off from the main body of the building, and several doors led to the private apartments. One of those doors on

the left hand side was now opened by Beatrice ; and as Theresa entered it, she said,

“ These, my friend, are your quarters, in the garrison phraseology to which you must now become accustomed. Here you will find everything conducive to your comfort and that of your old kinswoman. When I say every thing, I must include the youth by whom you were accompanied. His presence will best answer for his safety, of which you seemed to have some doubts. I now leave you for this night. To-morrow early I shall be with you again, and always when my coming is necessary or pleasing to you. Be these my parting words—rely on *my* friendship, be convinced of De Bassenveldt’s magnanimity ; and remember that self-confidence is the chief trait in that first quality of a hero ! Good night, Theresa, and a bright and brilliant morrow for us all !”

An affectionate embrace closed this strange conference, which filled Theresa with the pure delight of a generous mind relieved from the belief in another’s unworthiness. She gazed on the figure

of Beatrice descending the stairs ; and despite her repugnance for her bold and immoral opinions, she could not repress an admiration for her force of mind. She was confident in her sincerity, and satisfied of her having the power as well as the inclination to protect her ; for Theresa felt as if Beatrice stood between her and De Bassenveldt's passion, which, so dangerous and dazzling in itself, came reflected through the medium of her advocacy in a way that our heroine could not but confess to be genial and soothing to her feelings. She was by degrees, but imperceptibly to herself, becoming accustomed to the consciousness of this passion, and she had been more than woman, and consequently beyond our sympathy, had she been unaffected by the homage of such a man, so flatteringly displayed.

In the ante-room to which the door admitted her, was Trinette, evidently awaiting her coming ; and she was immediately introduced by this attendant into the chamber beyond. There she saw, with ineffable delight, the apprentice in conversation

with Madame Marguerite; while Nona was employed in arranging various matters of furniture and articles of dress, which seemed to have been provided with most considerate liberality for the use of the fair captives. Unrestrained by any false or factitious check, Theresa rushed into the arms that were open to receive her; as heedless of the scruples that pursued her, as is a sea-beat vessel of the stormy gust from which she flies to some sheltering harbour.

The joy of the apprentice seemed almost to equal hers. He appeared to read in her looks the evidence of the new temptation that had assailed her; and of his own influence that had repelled it. The sympathy with which she received his embrace was better than a thousand words. She ran over hurriedly the particulars of her interview with Beatrice—and softening down such parts of the latter's discourse as her modesty shrank from, she did not do justice to her own merit in resisting such a junction of temptation. But the apprentice gave a full measure of gratitude for this proof

of her attachment, and while seemingly indifferent to his own fate (and as she thought, unjust to De Bassenveldt's magnanimous treatment of him) he appeared only alive to her fidelity. His self-pride was at its height ; and as he strained Theresa in his arms, gazed rapturously on her, and bent down his head close to her lovely face, that blushed upon his bosom, he exclaimed again and again,

“ This is indeed Love's triumph ! ”

Madame Marguerite raised her hands and eyes in shocked surprise at this scene, a palpable defiance of all the established laws of family pride and female prudery. Its chief actors seemed scarcely conscious of the good dame's existence, and two hours flew by in the rapid tautology of love. Seated in a recess of the chamber, the lovers seemed to have concentrated in it the whole of their thoughts and cares and feelings. Theresa opened, without reserve, the state of her mind, acknowledged her admiration for De Bassenveldt's conduct, and the casual impression made on her by his passion ; but made ardent vows that she

would never swerve from her plighted faith, or separate her destiny from him to whom gratitude and affection doubly bound her. She went even further than this. For, to remove any lingering doubt of his rival's influence, she declared her readiness to adopt any plan the apprentice might frame for flight from the castle; and her final intention, if that failed, to throw herself at De Bassenveldt's feet, and appeal to his chivalric and generous character, with a full avowal of her attachment.

“And art thou indeed sure, Theresa,” said her lover, “that when at last in De Bassenveldt's presence, in actual contact with his passion, raised from thy suppliant posture by his hands, and it may be, clasped in his ardent embrace—art thou sure thou could'st even then resist, and—”

But the apprentice was stopped in the midst of his questioning, by the painful effect it produced on Theresa. The recollection of what *had* passed between her and De Bassenveldt; that he had already anticipated the apprentice's surmise,

and that she had been “in actual contact with his passion, clasped in his ardent embrace,” rushed upon her with a sense of self-reproach and humiliation that quite overwhelmed her. She felt that she was hypocritically concealing from him with whom she should have no guile, a circumstance which she believed had rendered her unworthy of his love. The mention of that memorable transaction rose to her lips. She was urged to the very point of its avowal—the words were starting forth—but a sudden incapacity of speech seemed to arrest their utterance, and a passionate burst of tears alone escaped her.

The apprentice, in his turn, seemed hurried on to the expression of some hitherto unuttered detail. He gazed for a moment intently on the weeping girl—then, as if irresistibly impelled by some strong emotion, he fell on one knee before her, and grasping her hands within his, he seemed about to speak—but starting up again, he paused a moment, then bent towards her, imprinted a kiss on her forehead, and said,

“ Even this, Theresa, I must endure—even thy unhappiness for a little while. Thy faith is undergoing an ordeal of fire—but even so it must be ! In a moment not less critical than this thou profferdest a vow, which I would not then suffer thee to make. Just now I let thee utter it, but thou art again absolved ! Thou hast been tried and hast resisted. But one more proof remains. Thou must see De Bassenveldt in his own person, not through the medium of princes’ encomiums or woman’s enthusiasm. Thou must see him in peril—in victory—in the absolute display of all that could make him worthy of thy love, or tempt thee to meet his passion. If thou canst still resist all that, and choose the lowly Lambert Boonen, instead of the high and proud De Bassenveldt—then, indeed, will I accept and glory in the heart which shall be given to love alone. The days of this thy trial are at hand. Events crowd thickly on. I shall be ever near thee—for I am assured of frequent, if not constant access to thee. Let what may come of danger in this perilous place, it is

at least a place of safety to thee, as long as life is mine. Escape is utterly impossible from such a strong hold as this. We must await the issue of the fate that has brought us here, and Heaven send us safe through it !”

Theresa recovering from her embarrassment, and profoundly affected by all her lover uttered, would have replied in a strain to satisfy and soothe him ; but the appearance of Paul Cuyper, the librarian and genealogist, who was invested with the duty of announcing the apprentice’s hour for retiring to his own apartments, prevented any further interchange of words. Lambert Boonen retired ; and Theresa and Madame Marguerite, taking possession of their separate, but adjacent sleeping-rooms, parted in search of the repose which was as much needed by as it seemed impossible to our heroine. She felt no susceptibility for sleep. The exciting march of events seemed to raise her above the common weakness of nature. She received Nona’s attention mechanically ; but instead of repairing to the couch which invited

her to rest, she entreated her faithful waiting maid to occupy hers in the adjoining room ; and then wrapping her mantle round her, she sat at the casement that looked down into the castle courts, and far beyond the walls across the river, and over the adjacent country.

The scene thus displayed before her in the soft light of a waning moon, combined much that was picturesque and beautiful both in art and nature. The castle courts and parapets, in their varied light and shadow, were alive with the glittering beams reflected by arms and armour, as the soldiers moved along in busy preparation for the soon expected attack. Galleries were in the act of being erected with clattering sounds, across the more exposed parts of the works, where the besieging cannon, and the newly invented bomb shells, were most likely to be directed. Culverins, falconets, and ammunition barrels were heavily rolled along from station to station ; and all the awful circumstances of coming conflict were combined with the loud voices of men, the neighing of

horses, and the unceasing clash of arms. Figures half revealed, half hid in shade, were in motion at all points, conveying orders of preparation to each group of living machinery that moved in obedience to the pointed finger of command. As Theresa keenly gazed below, she thought she could distinguish Beatrice among these officers, in active communication between the others, and one, who by his shifting position from place to place, and being followed in each movement by several attendants, she concluded to be De Bassenveldt, the chief of all this exciting combination, with whose fate she felt her own to be so involved, that the instinctive glance with which she followed his movements, might be almost considered as bestowed on her own. But while this process of mental sympathy went on, her thoughts seemed still turned towards the lover to whom she had so solemnly bound herself; and the double union of which she thus formed a part, caused a confusion of ideas and sentiments that seemed to envelope all in a shroud of indistinctness and doubt.

Theresa sat thus occupied, if the dreamy vagueness of this mood may be so called, until, by degrees, the bustling sounds below became comparatively still. The moon no longer looked at her own brightness in the liquid mirror of the Meuse, but had sunk in her downward course towards the distant forest. The whole aspect of the scene became changed. A drowsy depth of shade spread over all, as if nature itself were tired and irresistibly sinking to repose. It was then that Theresa distinguished through the murmurs of the courts and ramparts, the melody of the nightingales, from the leafy depths of wood and bower with which the castle was surrounded. As the thrilling cadences were sent out, and echoed in answering throats that seemed surcharged with song, the tones of a human voice came gently on Theresa's ear, warbling an air so wild and in such strange harmony with the feathered choristers, that it was evidently the spontaneous inspiration of a musician whose whole heart was in sympathy with the scene. Theresa had not long to doubt

of his identity. That well known, deep felt voice seemed to awaken, as an echo in her breast, its own sounds, that had slept there from the night on which she had before heard it. She listened, breathlessly and motionless, while the strain went on, adapting itself with exquisite taste to the translated imitation of a well-known canzonet of Maria Visschers,* and to every rise and fall in the swelling throats that ran its wild accompaniments.

Hark ! does the nightingale
Wake the deep woods around,
And thrill the silent vale
With the soft touch of sound ?
Or does some lonely lyre,
Throbbing in every string,
Hold captive in its wire
The wind's sweet whispering ?
Is it a magic flute
That wildly breathes along,
While echo's self is mute
Fearing to spoil the song ?
'Tis heaven's own airs that float
Downwards upon the breeze,
For sure no living throat
Could pour forth notes like these !

* A celebrated Dutch poetess of those days, most celebrated for her translation of Tasso.

As the last word died away, and the warbling symphony of the night-bird alone was heard, Theresa could not restrain her words, but leaning forward from the casement, she exclaimed,

“ Oh, go on, go on !”

Responsive to this entreaty, the last stanza was repeated, in tones louder, and in cadences still more delicious than before. The very sentries who paced below stood still and listened ; the voice came distinctly from a square tower that stood almost close to Theresa’s casement ; and when it gave up the strain a whispered murmuring seemed to run round the angular projection, and it spoke as if uttered close to the listener’s ear.

“ Good night, good night, Theresa ; Heaven bless and watch thee !”

At the same moment a white handkerchief was visible to our heroine, as it waved through the increasing gloom. She returned the signal with her own ; and as she withdrew into the chamber, she exclaimed with a sigh,

“ How sweet ! how delicious is his voice ; how

pure, how exquisite his taste ! But are strains like these best suited to this hour of coming strife, and danger, and death ? Is not the trumpet's blast more fitting—more manly ? Alas ! alas ! why is not Lambert Boonen a hero as well as a lover ? Why is De Bassenveldt both ? And I—why do I feel the inspiration of his spirit stir in my ambitious and unsatisfied bosom !”

She flung herself on her couch, gazed on the glimmer of the expiring lamp ; and with the extinction of its flickering beam her wearied mind once more found forgetfulness in sleep.

CHAPTER IV.

THERESA'S sleep was feverish and disturbed. She started from it at times, in doubt as to her situation ; and listened, to catch the sounds of the voice that still vibrated in her memory, the songs of the nightingale, or the harsh noises of warlike preparations. The tread of sentinels, and the tollings of the castle clock, convinced her of the reality in which she existed ; and an instinctive feeling (and a true one) suddenly told her that the considerate care of De Bassenveldt had silenced each rude impediment in the immediate neighbourhood to her repose.

Lulled by this flattering conviction she slept again ; and again she awoke, disturbed by she knew not what. She opened her eyes, and strove to look through the darkness around ; and just in that part where the faint starlight (for the moon was long before down) forced through the casement into the interior gloom, she saw a cloak-wrapped figure standing close to her bed. Our heroine was not one of those who scream on all occasions for help, or for — effect. She possessed remarkably that passive courage which so often avoids danger by restraining the appearance of fear. Her heart beat high, but she lay still and silent, even while the figure cautiously approached. After a short pause, in which the person appeared to lean forward as if to catch her breathing, the figure slowly rose, and, as it retired, Theresa fancied she distinguished its outstretched arms in the gesture of invocation, and she felt sure that a chaste and ardent prayer uprose for *her*. The figure was gone. The room was dark and still. She gazed out ; raised herself up ; and

listened for a returning step, another breath—but in vain.

“It is then De Bassenveldt?” murmured she—
“it is he who watches over, prays for—adores me thus! What a miracle I have wrought in him! What a wondrous being he is! How can he enter here? I saw no secret way—but no matter—it would be blasphemy to doubt the purity of such guardianship. Oh, Lambert, Lambert! I must not forget thee the while; nor risk, for both our sakes, to see, or hear, or—if possible to think of thy mysterious, and ah how dangerous rival!”

With highly excited feelings and heaving breast, Theresa lay in a state of musing unconsciousness betwixt slumber and waking, until the loud and near report of a cannon roused her from all uncertainty, and caused her to spring up in her bed: she saw her chamber lighted by the risen sun; but as she prepared to look from the casement, in uncalculating alarm, she shrunk back on perceiving a fully accoutred military figure sitting at her bed-side. It was Beatrice

who had gently stolen into her room, and who had watched her awakening, to soothe any fears which might be excited by the morning gun, and to prepare her for the much more serious alarms to be immediately expected. For Lieutenant Gallagher, with other scouts and advanced parties, had returned during the night, with intelligence that the troops of the archdukes were approaching the castle in several directions, and that its almost instant investment was to be looked for.

“This is Count Ivon’s doing—the suggestion of his delicacy,” said Beatrice, after the first few words in which she relieved Theresa from her surprise. “Resolved not yet to approach thee, my friend, he has commissioned me to this task. And now be of good heart, Theresa. The hour of glory is at hand, for De Bassenveldt and all those who bask in the rays of his renown. Rise up, my friend. My tire-woman and thine own are ready to attend thee. Yet there is but brief space for toilette dalliance. And pray impress on thy

good kinswoman within, the need of quickened movements and content with scant attendance. War now shakes hands with time, Theresa, and leads him rapidly on. Oh, how my spirit is up in arms, and longing for this contest ! Now, for a space, farewell, my friend. My duties call me hence. The chaplain, Father Ambrose, will do the honours of the breakfast-board to thee and the worthy dame. Do with him as thou wilt, let him guide ye to all worth seeing within the castle, and to the best points of view for marking the glorious scenes that are to be enacted without. Mayhap, Theresa, thou may'st see me too, in deeds not often done by women, and which when done at all, are inspired by an influence that raises them beyond their sex. But enough of this—Farewell !”

As Beatrice moved away, through a private door in the leather-covered wainscoat, which she opened and closed by a spring, Madame Marguerite popped in her uncoiffed head at the re-

gular entrance, and nodding it familiarly, she exclaimed,

“ Well, Theresa love, is not this delightful ? Think of the archdukes having already sent their troops to rescue us ? Depend on it, the marquess and the baron are at their head. How fine it will be to see the castle attacked and defended ! Ah, many a lance will be bent and many a head broken in our quarrel ! But I shall be really sorry when Count Ivon is taken ; and Lieutenant Gallagher, too, he is a well bred man, and of ancient race, no doubt. And so, after all, my dear, it turns out—for Trinette told me all about it—that this poor Beatrice is an innocent creature like ourselves ; and that she only ran away from the convent to escape that brute Trovaldo, who had designs upon us all alike. Oh, the Turk ! No offence to Count Gerrard the Saracen, though, who, as they tell, put all those frightful turbaned heads in every corner of the castle. We must mind what we say in this place,

for Father Ambrose assured me last night that the ghost of Count René, the wizard, another of this mysterious race, performs its nightly incantations in one of the wings—this very one perhaps,—as he used to do during his life in the fourteenth century.”

This was communicated in a deep whisper, above which Theresa had no wish to provoke Madame Marguerite’s voice, for she knew that the living descendant of the wizards and Saracens of Welbasch Castle possessed facilities of hearing superior to his buried ancestors, and powers which she was disposed to consider to the full as magical.

“ Yes, Theresa, love, we must be very discreet in all we say or do here, although it is a fine old-fashioned feudal place, and a charming situation to stand a siege. How much I long to see a battle ! The sight and the sound of war must be so pleasant, when one is quite safe in an impregnable castle, equally honoured by the besieged and the besiegers. Oh, Heavens, what a horrid crash ! Let us fly—

let us hide ourselves ! Oh ! again ! the walls are splitting !”

These sudden exclamations were caused by discharges of heavy ordnance from some of the outer works, against a party of the enemy that was making a reconnoissance close to the edge of the river beyond, with a view towards commencing immediate approaches against the village and castle. These sounds were indeed the voice of war, opening on its victims, and hallooing to the charge its ready followers, danger, suffering, and death. Yet there is in that terrible voice an undefinable charm for those who have not witnessed its supervening horrors in minute detail. There are few breasts that do not confess an instinctive thrill of pleasure, as the roar of hostile canons, or a rattling volley of musquetry breaks on them for the first time, inconsiderate not only of their own danger, but of the sufferings of others. Selfishness and sympathy are alike deadened at that wild moment ; and civilized man is for a space transformed again into his natural state. True to

this feeling, and with every motive urging to its display, the garrison of Welbasch sent forth a united shout from rampart and battlement, that echoed far beyond the river which separated them from the foe. It spoke defiance and desperation in every tone. Repeated discharges from culverin and falconet, swelled the fierce chorus; and a thousand auxiliary noises from village and castle, increased the uproar to the utmost capability of sound.

There was not even a woman's bosom within reach of these combined excitements that did not bound responsively. For women as well as men are the creatures of circumstances; they sympathize in one age with what they may recoil from in the next. The prevalent feeling of those times even for them was bold and warlike. Instances of female heroism were of every day occurrence, such as were displayed by Sybilla of Cleves, the Princess of Epinoi, and others of their sex celebrated in history, and a parallel to which was now exhibiting in the actions of our Beatrice, who was

among the first to rush to the river's side, with those who were ordered to cross it, in boats and rafts, and oppose the reconnoitring party that had advanced from the royal force.

While Madame Marguerite stopped her ears and shut her eyes, rather from silliness than fear, and soon uncovered and opened them again, more from curiosity than any high wrought feeling, our heroine felt herself at once to tremble and glow, as her heart throbbed high, and the blood seemed to run in circling eddies through her frame. Essentially feminine as she was, she was not insensible to the force of habit. Like the generality of her sex in those days, she deeply enjoyed the feelings which the tilts and tournaments of a no distant epoch had fostered, and to which the gallant struggle with which she was herself identified, had given a more ennobling impulse. But a more stirring excitement on the present occasion was her personal influence in its causes and consequences. She could not doubt that De Bassenveldt's patriotism was impelled tenfold by his passion for her.

She saw herself, therefore, as it were, the inspiration of the deeds which his valour was now about to do—and she could not resist the enthusiastic forethought that success would crown the struggle. Elevated by the thought, all petty impediments to its indulgence ceased to exist, or were unheeded; and she felt for awhile as if she could herself rush into the conflict, the glories of which seemed so peculiarly her own.

She little heeded the matin benison of Father Ambrose, who entered her chamber, a breviary in one hand and a crucifix in the other, muttering together his broken prayers for safety and imperfect invitation to breakfast. She entreated him to lead her to some place whence she might distinctly mark the scene of combat, her own and Madame Marguerite's apartments being chosen, by Count Ivon's orders, in the southern wing of the castle, which commanded a beautiful view of the river and country towards Dinant, but was quite free from exposure to the enemy's approaches.

The chaplain, with much wonderment at this

request, obeyed it nevertheless, and piloted Theresa, who was followed by Madame Marguerite, Nona, Trinette, and other female attendants, to the picture gallery, which stretched along the whole of the western front, looking down on the village and river, and right into the positions which the enemy were now rapidly taking up. Theresa hastened to a window and gazed on the animating scene. The objects that first caught her attention were the inhabitants of the village, which poured out its entire population, flying towards the protection of the castle ; every one carrying some object most precious or most portable, a child, a bed, a bundle of clothes or linen, or fragments of motley furniture from the dear loved homes now abandoned ; while several drove before them cows, pigs, or flocks of poultry, all sending forth discordant sounds of affright or discontent.

Notwithstanding the smoke that now rose from the oft-discharged ordnance, the river shone in the full beams of the morning, and the sky glowed bril-

liantly above. The woods looked fresh in the bright livery of spring, and nature seemed to smile on the rude efforts by which man would strive to deface her perennial charms. As far as the eye could reach, the hostile troops were visible, advancing along the causeway on the left hand side of the river, and deploying from the forest beyond, artillery, cavalry, infantry ; while numerous ammunition and baggage carts, and camp equipage of every description, were evident in various directions ; and the cornets and trumpets of the advanced guard sounded so close to the river side, that the rocks which formed the castle basement echoed back their summons as if in mockery. Several shots from arquebuss and carbine were fired across the river at the flying inhabitants of the village, by the royalist skirmishers who had lodged themselves in the little alder copse. It was at those assailants that the first piece of cannon was discharged from the castle ; and the effects of such a shot have been thought worthy of record in the pages of history. It killed two

brothers, Spaniards, who belonging to different regiments, had just met at that spot, and were embracing when the fatal bullet tore its way through both their bodies. This chance incident produced a powerful effect on the feelings of the besiegers. They were inflamed beyond the common excitement of war. Each soldier seemed invested with a closer brotherhood than that of arms to the unfortunate pair; and the dead bodies, locked together, and left exposed to view for several days by the orders of Trovaldo, worked on the minds of the whole army to such a pitch, that each and all considered the quarrel less as a political contest than a family feud.

Theresa followed, with anxious eyes, the detachment of the castle troops in the act of crossing the river, in boats and rafts that were ready constructed for the sorties of the garrison. These were furnished with breast works of wicker, covered with leather and stuffed with wool, which afforded protection against musquetry; and the soldiers and horses thus ferried safely over, quickly

commenced landing under cover of the castle guns, which continued their discharges with increasing vigour. A fierce opposition on the part of the royal troops in the copse, who every moment received strong reinforcements, now took place. The Spanish and Italian pikemen, shining in steel cuirasses and helmets, first offered themselves against the cavalry, and met on their terrible weapons horses and riders, as they splashed through the sedge and mud, and forced their way up the sloping banks. The dismounted dragoons, who in other parts leaped from the boats, and were less affected by those weapons, soon gained a footing, and drove back the pikemen by discharges from their heavy musquets. As these veterans retired through the copse, a line of Walloon arquebusiers were distinguished by their slouched hats, loose sleeved coats, wide breeches, and high-heeled and square-toed shoes. These troops, always among the best in the royal armies, now boldly opposed themselves to their fellow countrymen, indifferent, like true mercenaries, to the patriotic shouts from

De Bassenveldt's men ; and in return for loud appeals in the name of their country, glory, and liberty, they sent back a steady volley, with the silent apathy of veterans fighting for mere pay. Cheered on by their officers, and burning with indignation, the black hussars paid back this compliment with interest ; and they soon cleared a way for the mounted troopers of their corps, who now landed without much impediment, formed, and charged the opposing squadrons, which came gallantly up in every direction,

“ Oh, for Heaven's sake,” cried Theresa to father Ambrose, who stood muttering prayers at her side, “ name to me those various officers who lead on *our* troops so bravely !—tell me who is he who now gallops on in front, with his lance in its rest ?—who that one who waves his sword over his head ?—who—”

“ Softly, softly, young mistress ; and to the best of my skill, and as far as weak eyes will admit, I will point out our gallant captains to you. But methinks such a scene—”

“Quick, quick, then, good father ! Now tell me his name yonder, engaged with those three cavaliers ?”

“Let me see, let me see—Saint Michael be my safeguard, what a smoke there is ! how it rolls across the stream ! Eh ? he with the lance in rest ?—he waving his sword ?—he ?—but in sooth these suits of black armour are so marvellously alike, I find it difficult—”

“Oh, father, you are too tedious—pardon me, but all is shifting and changed each second. Holy Virgin ! one is down—horse and rider together ! Another ! Oh, how the lances shiver in splinters, and the rapiers strike fire ! Now, father, tell me, oh tell me, who is *he* ? Is that Count Ivon ?”

“Bless and protect us, child !” exclaimed Madame Marguerite, “how can Father Ambrose distinguish him you fix on ? you are pointing to a hundred warriors at once.”

“How light, how graceful is his bearing ! What a beautiful horse ! Yes, yes, it is he—it

is the leader of yesterday's escort—I know him by his Arabian steed,” uttered Theresa.

“Aye, aye, now you are right indeed, fair daughter; that is Rolando, Count Ivon's own charger—God send him safe, amen!”

“Amen, amen!” cried Theresa, clasping her hands and leaning out of the open casement; and then in the ardour of the moment she tore the scarf that had loosely covered her neck, and waved it into the air, in exultation and encouragement to the valour that hurried her on.

“Oh, these are shocking scenes, and this a dreadful place! Let us retire, good Father Ambrose, to a more suitable situation—to our eating room in fact, for the body requires support under such wasting events. Come, come, Theresa child! you are exposing yourself sadly. What will Baron Lyderic or the marquess say if they distinguish you? Come, come!”

To the part of this remonstrance thus addressed to our heroine by Madame Marguerite, no atten-

tion was paid ; but Father Ambrose sympathized too keenly with that which appealed to him, to delay his reply. The worthy chaplain was too familiar with scenes of rude warfare, in the distracted state of the province, to feel much alarm at the tokens of contest which did not involve his immediate safety, and he gladly led the way towards the solid consolations which Madame Marguerite's agitation required. But Theresa resisted every persuasion to retire from the place she occupied. Absorbed in the scene on which her eyes were rivetted, she only entreated to be left alone ; and as her entreaties were considered by Madame Marguerite and Nona very much in the light of commands, she was soon left the sole occupant of the picture gallery, all the attendant females retiring in the train of the chaplain.

Leaning on the window frame, she still intently watched the fluctuations of the combat, which became each moment more animated and more confused, smoke and dust enveloping in great part the soldiers of either party, who were mingled

indistinguishably together. The painful and sickening details of the fight were thus quite concealed from her, while the clash of arms, the shouts, the trumpet blasts, all that was exciting, was distinctly borne along, in the intervals of the artillery peals or the sharp rattle of musquet shots ; but the wounds, the blood, the groans and execrations were neither seen nor heard.

Unconscious equally of time or space, or her own sensations, Theresa participated in the scene, in which she was in heart and mind as much an actor as though her person had partaken of every shock which in spirit she sustained ; and she was aroused, as from the midst of the conflict, by her own name softly whispered behind her, in a voice at all times so strangely magical, as to harmonize with every other tone, no matter how extraneous, or how seemingly discordant. She turned as truly and as tremblingly as the needle to the pole, and, with an animated gesture of recovered consciousness, she convinced herself that she gazed on the apprentice.

“ Oh, Lambert, Lambert ! Art thou here once more ? Heaven be praised ! How long have I forgòtten thee ! ” exclaimed she, meeting full half way the proffered embrace.

“ Forgotten me ! ” replied the lover, with a look more incredulous than reproachful.

“ Yes, yes, indeed I had forgotten thee, almost entirely for hours past. I confess it, in shame and sorrow. Oh, Lambert, thou must not leave my side. I am beset with strange temptations, and I want thy aid to keep me firm and faithful. I do, indeed I do.”

“ Temptations, Theresa ? ”

“ Aye, almost irresistible. From that sweet hour last night in which I was lulled to rest by the melody of thy song, I have not ceased to be assailed by all that is most hard to resist—a mysterious agency, at once awful and insinuating, and a combination of high and splendid excitements that carry me beyond *our* sphere. Oh ! Lambert, listen to those sounds—look at yonder scene of glory—are they not inspiring ? Is not each one

that mingles in heroic deeds, himself a hero? And *he*, the chief of all, the master spirit that all obey, what must we not acknowledge him? You answer me not. Oh, call to mind the magnanimity he shews towards you, and deal back to him a fair measure of liberality.”

“Dost thou, my beloved one, then look for more than mortal power from me? Would'st have me foster in thy breast the dangerous influence you confess? Is not this too much, Theresa?”

“Oh Lambert, how little dost thou know my heart! I but ask thee to aid me in stifling this torturing influence that I myself cannot conquer. Didst thou at once act towards De Bassenveldt in the spirit he shews towards thee, that instant would this influence on my imagination cease to exist. It is thy jealous diffidence in me, and thy fear of him, that makes his rivalry of moment.”

“Theresa, be convinced that what in De Bassenveldt appears magnanimous is less than it appears. He fears me not—and haply he trusts in

the dazzling glare of those qualities to which thine avowal proves thee so susceptible."

"I do confess myself affected by what I have heard and what I see of his character and conduct. I should be less than mortal were I not so. But oh, how I am this moment fearless of all his power. Thy presence is my talisman. With thee beside me, Lambert, I can think and talk of Count Ivon, as calmly as of one of this long file of ancestors of his, that lines these gallery walls. Then quit me not again. Let us avail ourselves of his pride, his confidence—no matter what, that leaves us so unfettered. Let us seize on some fortunate moment in the midst of these alarms, to escape from this place of peril. Rather would I trust to the double dangers of Trovaldo and De Roulemonde's pursuit than to the secret power of him, who, unheard and unseen, and leaving me nominally free, yet holds me in virtual thralldom and transforms me, from the mere woman that nature meant me for, to the excited participation of scenes like that."

She pointed towards the casement; and as if ashamed of her late sympathy with battle, or scared by its increasing tumult, she at the same time hid her head in the ready refuge of her lover's bosom.

At this moment the loud blasts of trumpets and the beat of drums sounded the peculiar signals for retreat. The apprentice, as if aroused by the very spirit of that sympathetic curiosity from the betrayed of which Theresa had just shrunk, sprang towards the casement, in the direction of which his eye had, in his own despite, been wandering during the whole of the preceding colloquy. He drew our heroine with him in his apparently involuntary movements, and they both gazed intently and silently for a few minutes on the scene of conflict.

“ Oh, Heavens !” exclaimed Theresa, “ the castle troops are retreating—see how they fall back on the river—how the cavalry reembark—how their assailants press forward in overwhelming force ! All is lost—all is lost !”

“Nay, nay, Theresa, thy warlike tact is poor indeed. Even I can see that this has been a mere skirmish—a challenge to the conflict. The garrison troops but shew signs of what they are prepared to do anon. Their few skirmishers are retiring upon the fortress, before the besieging force. This has been nothing,—a mere prelude.”

“Oh, God, then how dreadful the battle-piece itself will be! How could I sympathize with even these opening horrors! Oh take me hence, my friend! Let us fly from a scene repugnant to both our natures. Forgive me, Lambert, if led away by bolder fancies than beseem my sex, I have forgotten awhile the example of thy gentler taste. I know it abhors these rude pursuits.”

“Glorious and gallant, by Heavens! Well done, well done!” was the emphatic exclamation that interrupted Theresa; and as it burst from the apprentice’s lips, he struck his palm with force on the granite ledge of the casement. Theresa started in astonishment. He quickly turned to her; and, with cheeks still glowing in the im-

pulse that had inspired him, he tenderly and smilingly said,

“ Ah, Theresa, if thou hast felt this influence, how could I escape it? If I am thus moved by what so powerfully excited thee, 'tis but fresh evidence that nature meant us for each other. Every hour strengthens that sweet conviction, and each new assay that tries thy truth will bring it brighter and clearer through.”

“ See, Lambert, see,” said Theresa in a whisper, “ he comes back—mark him yonder, on that beautiful charger which you looked at yesterday with such admiration, and as he headed the escort that brought us prisoners here. That is De Bassenveldt—the chaplain pointed out him and his steed to me just now—he comes towards the castle—look on him—mark him well—thy daring, but *now* how harmless rival, Lambert. He winds up the way to the court-yard – but I must not let my eyes turn there—I will not be tempted.”

“ Thou art right, love,” said the apprentice, with a playful smile and satisfied tone—“ To shun

temptation is the surest part of virtue. But thine must yet be tried, Theresa ; so look out, sweet, on this brave troop and its leader.”

“ No, no, ’twould ill beseem me, prisoner and woman both, to court the gaze of these stern warriors, and of him whose delicate forbearance teaches me so good a lesson. But do thou, Lambert, closely watch Count Ivon as he comes—tell me what like of man he is—look full and fearlessly upon his face, and see if his mind speak visibly there. I am curious to know what you think of him whom, please Heaven, I may never see or know. Oh, that we were now far from these walls, in some remote and silent spot, sequestered from the world and its too tempting toils !”

“ Enchanting girl ! Thy frankness and purity speaking thus, is of more worth to me than conquerors’ wreaths or monarchs’ treasures. To win and wear thy love in this full breast is glorious emulation. I *will* do somewhat worthy of the prize. It shall be mine, by conquest as by gift.

I cannot take the treasure thou would'st give me until I have proved me worthy of the trust."

"And art thou *not*, my friend? What can enhance the value of thy fond and faithful heart?"

"Theresa, 'tis not enough, in days like these, and in thy peculiar case. Thy father looks for more, and he shall be satisfied. Some service to my suffering country, some marking deed in the bold struggle now on foot, shall stamp my right to claim thee at his hands. But yet proof is wanting that no delusion acts on your young and ingenuous mind. Thou believest that thou lovest me—nay, spare me that expostulating glance—'tis but belief, Theresa—for thy constant admission proves that when removed from thy sight I am no longer in thy mind."

"Oh no, oh no—thou must not say so, Lambert! thou art always in the depths of my true heart. The glare that dazzles me when thou art absent, is indeed a delusion, cheating me with visionary forms, and blinding me to the reality of what I think and feel."

“ Then mark me yet again, adored one—the love that thou shouldst glow with, the love that alone can satisfy me, is yet to be established. That all its elements are in thy breast, ’twould be ingratitude to doubt. But I must see and know it rooted there, Theresa, spreading its foliage through thy inmost soul, and with the perfumed screenery of its fruits and flowers excluding every influence but mine own. Such is the true and only rightful love. The common tests, absence and time, but nourish and confirm it. Can *thy* love stand those tests, Theresa? Yes, yes,—say yes, sweet girl, and let me put thee to them. It may be I am refining on this passion, and am trying thee too much, but bear with and meet my wishes. Consent to my withdrawing from thy presence for awhile. I occupy apartments in the tower close to thine own. The Wizard’s Tower ’tis called, for there, they say, Count René, a far-back ancestor of this line, lived and died in the practice of magic arts. Thence shall I watch thee by day, and sing to thee by night, myself the while

unseen. There, until liberty be given me to join in some such enterprise as I resolve on following, I shall be near thee, like a guardian spirit, ready to come at thy call, but sparing thee the influence of my actual presence, and giving thee full means to prove and know if thy heart be mine indeed, or if 'tis but that presence that makes thee believe it so. Thou art assured of all honour here. But if aught should go wrong, if a murmur or a thought should make thee *need* me at thy side, thy scarf tied round the cross-bar of thy casement will bring me to thee, ere time could serve to answer the signal. Thus wilt thou pass the ordeal I require. For if thou canst, alone and unsupported for even the briefest space, be true to the poor and prisoned apprentice, despite the blandishments of De Bassenveldt's proud suit, 'twould be ungenerous to thee, insane towards myself, to seek or wish for more. Speak now in answer, my Theresa. Speak and confirm the enthusiastic delight with which I anticipate thy words."

While the apprentice spoke, Therèsa listened with a profound and varying interest. Conflicting feelings were aroused. Pride, conscious truth, and warm affection rose by turns. Compacts like that proposed were nothing strange in those times, when the romance of chivalry had lost its rudeness, and an overstrained finessing in affairs of love was the constant cause of bitterness and woe. Theresa could not, in honour, as she felt it, shrink from the probation required. And the stern spirit of the age repressed all weak display of fond anxiety. She felt the truth of much of the apprentice's misgivings. She acknowledged it due to him and to herself to give some proof of the passion which had at times been wavering. She felt a deep sense of security in the close neighbourhood of her lover—and in the conviction which even then forced its way upon her, that all that was generous and noble must take place on Count Ivon's part. She seemed imbued with the spirit of his lofty confidence in himself; and the whole

dignity of her mind pressed her to meet and triumph in the ordeal that she was urged to.

“Lambert,” said she, in tones more resolute and less subdued than were her wont in speaking to her lover, “thy appeal to all the better feelings of my mind is answered. I am ready to meet thy proposal—aye, this very hour. It is but just and well beseeeming to us both. Even in this hour of wild alarm and dubious warfare, amid the tumults of this siege, with doubt and mystery shrouding my fate, I will enter on the trial you invite—unsupported but by my own heart, and my reliance in thy faith, and on his honour. I consent to the necessity of this privation. But thou wilt watch over me—I know thou wilt—thou wilt not be idle in the Wizard’s Tower, Lambert—thou wilt not forget my father’s still doubtful state? Thou wilt find means of communication with him, and thy uncle, too? I dare not suggest to thee to leave this place, even for a day, in the face of these dangers; but

tidings thou mayest obtain of those so dear to us. Oh, Lambert, profit by the liberty thou mayest command, and find the means of evasion. I cannot shake a bad presentiment from my soul that this parting may be wider and more lasting than we mean it. Forgive, oh, forgive, a weakness that will steal on my woman's heart ! I know not what it is, but a reptile terror creeps through my soul, oppressing me with a loathing sense of ill. Is not this moment awful ? In spite of my factitious elevation, I now confess it. This din of arms—this warlike clangour. Oh, Lambert, do not, do not abandon me ! I would be firm—I *will* be, if possible. But remember thy promise—the signal scarf will bring thee to my side. Thou wilt let me hear thy voice as last night brought it to me, constantly, too ! How faint of spirit I feel ! Heaven send me happily through this trial ! 'Twere well it were begun—even now then let us part. To thy tower, Lambert, and leave me here awhile. I dare not trust myself with thee longer, or in sooth I doubt my resolu-

tion. Leave me then, for mine honour's sake and thy own satisfaction."

"The love that meets no trials can gain no triumphs, Theresa. The bliss of well-proved confidence shall reward us both for this. In that delightful hope I part from thee ; but we shall not be separate, though asunder. Our spirits shall meet and mix together. My guardian care shall be with thee—my voice shall cheer thee—and my presence shall not thwart or bias thy free choice. Thus acting, I feel myself rise higher than my station, and some deed may haply prove me not altogether worthless. Thus I retire from thee for awhile, Theresa. I hear the clattering of booted feet upon the stair. This way leads to my quarters in the Wizard's Tower, of which I have free range and ample occupation. Adieu, my best beloved ! Rest confidently on my love, my honour, my devotion. Let not the sights and sounds of war appal thee. This castle laughs to scorn the opposing force. And well I know the gallant, glorious Maurice is at hand, with mighty

means to chase yon braggarts hence. Farewell, farewell, Theresa ; I leave thee in safe and sure guardianship — Farewell !”

The tender embrace that accompanied these words had no power to warm the frame or raise the feelings that were all benumbed with the shock of separation, as the apprentice withdrew from the picture gallery and left our heroine alone in its drear solitude. She could not weep. Thought was paralyzed. All the excitements which so lately had roused her were now powerless and dead. She heard the trampling of steeds in the court-yards, the trumpet blasts, the still continued roll of the artillery, but heard them all unmoved. She felt that De Bassenveldt was within view, had she but gazed from the casement into the court below. Yet she would not, could not, venture to look down. She sat fixed and motionless on a bench in a tapestried recess ; and looked as though sculpture had lent one lovely specimen of its art, to shame the grim display of painted monuments that hung around.

CHAPTER V.

THE days that had so rapidly passed since the arrival at Welbasch of Aben Farez, as the Moriscoe was now universally called, were filled with all the bustling preparations for warfare ; and secret expeditions took place, in which De Bassenveldt himself with many of his confidants were actors. They all played their parts at his bidding without inquiry into his plans or motives. His designs were impenetrable even to those by whom they were so often accomplished. All seemed to succeed ; and it appeared that neither persons nor

events could withstand him, when he wished to gain over the one or command the other. Stratagem was as natural to him on fit occasions, as was intrepidity, even to recklessness, when his purpose required it. While intently pursuing his designs on Theresa's heart, which he chose to obtain by a system of romantic and chivalric tactics, so usual in those days, he at the same time followed up his public duties with a zeal that seemed to speak him wholly devoted to them. Returning in triumph to his castle with her, the great object of his heart's solicitude, he brought back a mass of information on the plans of his enemies and assailants, gleaned with such accuracy as to make it appear that he must have mixed in the very councils that plotted his destruction. His chief agent was the Moriscoe, who was now constantly seen at his side, in the graceful costume of his ancient race, adopted by Count Ivon's full and ready approval. There was, however, one deep and dangerous agent at work against him, which all his energy, courage, and talent could not circumvent. *Ingratitude*, that

first-born of envy, which a noble mind can never guard against, because it only imagines its existence when writhing under its attacks, this base passion was not negatively opposing De Bassenveldt's progress, but actively working his ruin. When he dismissed Lyderic from Welbasch Castle, in consequence of Beatrice's exposure of his designs on her, he did so with regret, but scarcely with animosity. He made allowance for the temptation thrown in Lyderic's way ; and the peculiar nature of his own feelings towards Beatrice left him less susceptible of enmity towards one who looked on her with different views.

De Bassenveldt, in the spirit of mere adventure, had penetrated the convent sanctuary of St. Anne, to see with his own eyes the Heiress of Bruges, of whose praises he had heard, with a curiosity that he was resolved to gratify. No sooner did his looks fix indeed upon her exquisite beauty, than he inwardly swore to possess it for himself. But the long-indulged libertinism of his former character was at once extinguished by the birth of this one

and only pure passion. He gazed on Theresa with sensations hitherto unknown to him, and he either dared not, or would not, approach her in the common form of wooing. He secretly vowed himself to her ; and to be informed of her character and disposition, to enjoy the delight of listening to her praise, he devoted his attentions (during his sojourn in the convent as an invalided pilgrim returned from the Holy Land) to Beatrice, who, as he learned from the garrulous porteress, was her chosen and intimate friend.

De Bassenveldt soon entered into the nature of the novice's enthusiastic mind. He was resolved to make it subservient to his views on her friend, and at the same time to rescue her at all risks from the dangerous and hateful position in which she herself was placed. His hitherto irresistible powers were not doomed to be baffled in this new project. He skilfully addressed himself to Beatrice's peculiar turn of thought ; and he so mixed the language of gallantry with a loftier tone, that he won her to his highest purpose, while she only

believed that she was lending herself to the lowest. Her conversation with Theresa will have already explained the purport and the result of Count Ivon's conduct towards her. Suffice it to say, that when he had safely secured her from the fate she was threatened with, and for his deep-laid scheme for gaining Theresa's person and heart, he only felt towards her as an ardent friend, doubly devoted to her by her disinterested and almost sublime attachment to him; and by the deep regard excited in such minds as his for those whom they have saved from danger or served in distress.

He sent Lyderic on his mission to Bruges, but not in that foolish confidence which at first it might have appeared. It has been seen that De Bassenveldt had powerful aid to back his suit, and thwart any treachery on the part of his *ci-devant* friend, with means of observation on his conduct to counteract what they could not prevent. But although informed of much of that conduct, certain that Lyderic did "play him

false," and with strong evidence that he was in league with his worst foes, he could neither bring himself to inflict the death which his letter threatened to the false one, nor yet to believe in the possibility that he would push his designs against him to the very extremity of ruin. Like every generous mind, he had his moments of almost wilful blindness. He knew that he rested on a volcano ; but he could not, he *would* not imagine that Lyderic's was the hand to place a torch to its slumbering fires.

Nevertheless, Lyderic de Roulemonde was now in the full exercise of his new appointment, as second in command to Don Juan de Trovaldo, of the forces specially destined for the siege of Welbasch Castle, and pursuing, with demoniac depth and energy of purpose, measures for its destruction, as well as that of its owner. It will be remembered that he boasted to the Governor of Bruges, who was then his jailor, but now his general, of his familiar knowledge of all the subterranean ways of the castle. He well knew the

different stations where stores and ammunition of all kinds were kept, and also of the intricate windings which gave access to them; and it will be seen with what effect he availed himself of this knowledge, communicated to him in full confidence by his best friend.

From the very first demonstrations exhibited by the assailing troops, it was evident that the siege would be carried on in a spirit of inveterate vigour.

How that was to be accompanied by remorseless perfidy shall presently appear.

In the mean time, Prince Maurice was employed with his usual activity, availing himself of events, and aiding their action by the abundant resources which so peculiarly distinguished his character. From the hour of his quitting Bruges, under the safe guidance of Van Rozenhoed, the prior, and their emissaries, he had not ceased a moment from his exertions in the great cause. He soon joined his small army close to Bommel, and he presented himself almost alone in

the camp of the revolted royalists. These, struck by the boldness of the measure, and captivated by the prince's brave and chivalric bearing, went over, to a man, into the service of the States of Holland, and surrendered the important Fort of St Andrew into the Prince's hands. This great object obtained, Maurice continued to act with consummate prudence, on a system which was speedily to be developed to his astonished enemies. The prolonged defence of Welbasch Castle was of infinite importance to his plans, as it occupied a considerable portion of the archduke's scanty army ; and De Bassenveldt swore not to surrender, while enough of its walls remained standing to shelter the last remnant of his regiment. Measures were taken to procure large supplies of provisions to meet the wants of the thronged garrison, now considerably increased in number by the crowds of villagers and peasants who sought refuge within the castle, from the furious enemy that scoured the neighbourhood around. Frequent sorties and continual attacks went on ;

while the slow but steady progress of sappers, miners and engineers, formed the under-current to the flood of open warfare which daily carried fresh victims to the ocean of eternity.

The siege had lasted a dozen days, every one of which had been filled by active and deadly operations. The approaches of the besiegers were already pushed, with a promptness common in those times of assault and battery, within the nearest possible limits. Not only were their works erected close along the river's edge, but possession was taken of the abandoned village, by a force which repeated attacks from the garrison failed to dislodge, and which was completely sheltered against any discharges from the castle ramparts, by the interjacent mass of perpendicular, and in some parts overhanging granite. Between the attacking cannon, however, and the castle ordnance, a ceaseless roar of hostility was kept up ; while demolished constructions on the river's bank, and shivered fragments of wall and rock, bore witness to the efficacy of each loud-mouthed

retort. Covered by this incessant cannonade, each desperate repetition of attack and sortie went on ; and every inch of ground lost and won was saturated with blood.

On the evening of the twelfth day, Don Juan de Trovaldo, Lyderic, and Barochio, the Italian engineer (so celebrated for his exertions during the memorable siege of Antwerp, fifteen years before), stood, with several officers of the staff, on a knoll that commanded a full view of the village and castle, and was within range of the guns from the latter. They gazed, more or less intently, on the labours of a body of pioneers and sappers, who, sheltered by the village defences, and quite unseen from the castle, were busily bringing into play an elaborate mass of hydraulic machinery, which stretched from the river into a small aperture high up in the granite wall. Each leathern hose, or pipe, or spout which connected the engines together, was directed in its course by sockets, guys, and pulleys of manifold complicity. At the application of each, Barochio burst into

restless exclamations of approval ; while Lyderic watched every movement with his sidelong look, and that nibbling of the nether lip, so indicative of base anxiety.

Trovaldo, jealous of Lyderic's interference in the conduct of the siege, and affecting to despise the intricacy of those scientific tactics which he was forced to tolerate, by the special orders of the war minister, showed comparatively little interest in what was going on. He paced the knoll from side to side, with folded arms, and a scowl of low-spirited indifference. He watched the proceedings, like a sullen sentry, as a point of duty, but not as if they inspired him with any sympathy. The artillery was playing its usual fierce accompaniment to the silent doings of the engineers ; and some random shots from time to time ploughed up the earth, or made their rough passage through the groups of chesnut trees that ornamented the spot. On these hints, several of the officers, particularly Barochio and Lyderic, cowered low behind the loose breast-work thrown up at

the foot of the hillock, and peeped cautiously over at the scene of their solicitude. But Trovaldo seemed to hold such security in scorn, and continued to walk to and fro unconcernedly, but evidently not careless.

“What a deep frown hangs on the general’s brow to-day,” observed one of the aides-de-camp to another.

“Yes,” replied the other, “his horoscope, methinks, told heavy tidings for this tenth of May 1600. He has not held up his head since morning dawned. Doomsday is come for *him*, ’twould seem.”

“Hush ! he advances this way ! he is about to speak.”

“Well, well, Barochio,” said Trovaldo, coming forward, and in a tone of sarcastic calm, much unlike his usual harsh energy—“when will this warfare of water-spouts be at an end ? You have worked incessantly for ten days and nights. The river is fretted, and the very fishes must be tired of these delays.”

“Patience, Don Juan, patience,” exclaimed the Italian, with a keen glance at the operations beyond the river. “In a moment more—nay, *now*, this very instant, the whole machine begins to work! Mark how the suction-hose swells out; and see how each connecting pipe throbs and leaps, like a huge serpent, up the rocks, and into the secret aperture. To Saint Geronimo all praise! If, Baron Roulemonde, you are sure of the local intricacies within, I pledge my skill, my fame, my head, that the enemy is ruined. The whole body of the river is at my command. I can suck it dry to its deepest bed!”

“In, in with the flood then, Barochio! Submerge them all! The whole stores of the castle, corn, wine, ammunition, all are in those hitherto inaccessible vaults—that almost invisible entrance commands every passage. Can nothing oppose the force of the stream?”

“Not all the dykes of Holland combined. To Saint Geronimo all praise!” cried the bigot or

hypocrite engineer, dropping on his knees, and crossing himself with real or mock devotion.

“ Pour it in, pour it in, in torrents !” uttered Lyderic, not noticing Barochio’s movements, but with eyes fixed on the castle, while Trovaldo and his attendant officers, in habitual superstition, uncovered their heads, and joined in a general genuflexion. But Trovaldo soon rose up again and said,

“ Heaven and the saints be thanked for whatever works ill to the enemies of our holy faith, or our royal masters ! Be they heretics or rebels let them perish ! Amen !”

“ Amen !” muttered the pious and loyal group around.

“ But still this pleases me not,” continued Trovaldo, in his gloomy tone ; “ I love not to see brave soldiers drowned like rats in a hole, or starved into submission. Rather in the breach or in the battle-field let me and my gallant comrades meet them, foot to foot ! Baron de Roulemonde, I could not refuse to permit this inglo-

rious plan of yours, or to aid the devilish cunning of Barochio here for the destruction of the arch-rebel ; but my soul is sad at the result—sword-blades and valour have had no share in this conquest.”

“ Patience again, Don Juan ! let me echo Barochio’s words. Wait, wait awhile, and you will have, or much I marvel, clashing of swords and crossing of pikes enough for your heart’s content. Think not De Bassenveldt will die in the flood we shall pour in upon him. Famine, by and by, if it force him not to yield, will at least dislodge him from his deluged den. But many a bloody stroke must be exchanged ere he abandon the strong hold of his race ; so cheer up, my gallant general, we shall have no lack of fighting. Does all work well, Barochio ?”

“ Work well !” repeated the grinning engineer, “ look at those leathern allies of ours that stretch up the rocks under yon mechanician’s guiding hand—see how they drink the stream, and vomit the draught into the castle’s heart. Let that but

last till to-morrow's dawn, and the whole garrison will be afloat !”

“My valiant Barochio !” exclaimed Lyderic, with a pleased yet malignant smile, “how would the grisly Counts of Welbasch stare from their graves, to see their *impregnable* fortress ruined by the aid of the vassal stream that served them for mere adornment !”

“Beware, beware, noble baron ;” said the superstitious Italian, in a timorous tone ; “speak not so lightly of the buried dead—we war not against them. Heaven and Saint Geronimo forbid that the bones of mouldering mortality should be disturbed by operations like ours !”

“By Heaven, but I believe they are though !” cried Trovaldo, in gloomy energy.

“Don Juan !” exclaimed Lyderic, in a reproachful and taunting accent.

“Nay, nay, good baron, you may sneer as usual, but I speak with cause. ’Tis notorious that witchcraft and magic have long held their court in yon gloomy tower ; and, hark ye, one

private word with you, while Barochio watches the progress of his pipes. Walk apart with me.”

“You stand in an exposed spot, Don Juan. Descend here to this shelter,” said Lyderic, whose courage was not of the instinctive violence of his general’s.

“Tut, tut, baron! When you have seen as much service as I have, you will despise expedients that never turned the destined course of a bullet. Come up from your shelter—I would speak with you.”

This was uttered in that tone of fearless authority, which in scenes of danger, gives inferior mortals so much influence over those by whom they are at other times held cheap, if not despised. Lyderic left Barochio leaning on the parapet, and watching the progress of his work; and stepping upwards he joined Trovaldo, who took him by the arm, and deeply whispered as they proceeded along,

“Ay, baron, I *do* believe the dead are roused from the tomb—one at least, whose grave was a

deep chasm in the Alpuxara mountains, has risen and shewn himself before me ; for last night I saw a Moriscoe dog, whom my rapier pierced through the heart years and years ago."

"How is this, Don Juan?" said Lyderic; "do you give way to fancies that Barochio might be ashamed to own?"

"By the life of my saint, 'tis true!" exclaimed Trovaldo, in a still more solemn tone. "I saw the turbaned, pale-faced miscreant look into the very curtains of my tent. It was no illusion, for every fold of his dress spoke to his identity. He was the father of Gaspar, my renegade slave, and of her whose image seems gnawing here at my heart."

"And what did you do?" asked Lyderic.

"Lay trembling like a craven culprit till the spectre vanished. And since that brief visiting I am no more myself. A heavy load is on me. I feel as though my final hour drew nigh. 'Tis needless to combat with this rooted feeling; I know that Fate hangs over me, ready to strike."

“I will not, Don Juan, combat this illusion, that a day must dissipate. Even now success awaits you, triumph and honour will crown this expedition, and—”

“The triumph and honour will all be yours,” interrupted Trovaldo. “What have I done in this exploit? I know no secret ways—I plant no water-pipes, to steal upon or drown my enemy. But be it as it may, my whole frame is oppressed with a presentiment of evil. I never felt it before, nor shall I have to suffer it long. My day is nearly done; but never mind, let fate run its course. Still I grasp at the chance of regaining her for whom alone I care to live. Let our works go on. Keep this to yourself, nor let my weakness be exposed. To horse now, baron, and while I pen my despatches to the archdukes, look you to the northern battery. Its fire seems to slacken; but we must complete yonder breach. Let me but live to mount it, to meet this dog De Bassenveldt, to snatch Beatrice from his arms, and then die,—I seek no more.”

With these words Trovaldo turned to the place where he had left Barochio, who, in anxiety to get a better view of the operations so skilfully going on, had shifted from his former position into that which Lyderic had occupied beside him, and he thence peeped cautiously over. At the moment when Lyderic with Trovaldo returned to the spot, a cannon ball from the ramparts whizzed across the river, tearing up a furrow of foam along its surface ; then striking the bank, it leaped with a fatal rebound, and struck the unfortunate engineer's head clean from his shoulders.

The usual exclamations of horror and surprise burst from the group around. Trovaldo, turning to Lyderic, who stood silently biting his lips, coolly said,

“ Well baron ! was this exposure more dangerous than that shelter ? Who after this would seek to shun his fate ? Let it be a lesson to all. Carry off the body, and tell Spinelli he may dance for joy : he is now head of the water-spout department—that bullet signed his promotion ! ”

Trovaldo now mounted his horse and rode off to another part of the lines. Some of his attendant staff galloped away with various orders. Lyderic hastened to the newly appointed chief engineer, to require his immediate superintendence of the important works so successfully established by his predecessor. The buzz and bustle of the scene went on with ceaseless vigour; and, with the exception of the General-in-chief, the whole of the besieging force rejoiced in the measures in full effect for inundating the fortress, soon forgetting the headless contriver of the operations which caused such universal joy.

Within the castle of Welbasch nothing could exceed the consternation excited by the effects of Barochio's skill and De Roulemonde's treachery, except the presence of mind and intrepidity displayed by De Bassenveldt, in divining and carrying into immediate action the only effectual remedy. At the first report made by the astonished storekeepers of the extraordinary appearance of water oozing into vaults cut in the solid rock, a thou-

sand conjectures were started, as to the pumps and wells having by some phenomenon changed their operations, or the immense leaden tanks and reservoirs on the castle roofs having “burst their seams,” and discharged their contents. The rapidly increasing rush of the invading element left no time for the solution of these theories : to stop its progress was the great object. But in order to accomplish this the line of its ingress was to be traced, and the efforts at doing so increased the evil, for every little trap-door or portal opened in the subterranean galleries to aid the inquiry, facilitated the entry of the flood that now came booming in. The passage chosen by Lyderic and communicating with every ramification of the rest, was of the smallest width ; but the resistless force of the propelling power carried every obstruction before it. Partitions and doors, of stone or wood, gave way alike. The artificial tide filled every nook and crevice, and burst through all impediments. Before any real knowledge of its source could be acquired, irreparable

mischievous was done. Several of the persons employed in the care of the provisions and provender stowed into these hitherto impregnable compartments, were drowned ere they imagined the possibility of danger. Others fled in dismay at the sight and sound of the stream, which hissed and boiled along the cavities, forcing the long-confined and noxious air before it, with thick columns of dust and rubbish, the accumulation of centuries.

As soon as the alarm was understood above, scores of persons rushed down, with every possible contrivance to aid in stopping the torrent that roared mercilessly in. Beds, blankets, wool-packs were thrust forward, in vain opposition, by each new comer. The already swollen corpses of the early victims met them at the foot of every flight of stairs ; and provisions of all kinds, corn, meal, dried meats and wine were tossed in promiscuous destruction on the agitated waters. The ammunition magazine, far sunk in the rock, and in the spot fixed on as the most remote from any possible

contingency of danger, was also soon approached by the waves. This produced redoubled exertions and tenfold consequent confusion, on the part of the household, the garrison, and the numerous refugees who had taken shelter in the castle. All caught the alarm, and felt that their very existence was at stake, while the thousand means suggested for relief all clashed with and counteracted each other.

In the midst of confusion, vociferation, and clamour, De Bassenveldt appeared.

He lost not a moment in idle astonishment or still more idle grief. A throb of agitation certainly shook his heart, and his brain seemed to burn with condensed energy of thought. A sense of his own and his people's danger, a certainty that his means of defence were reduced by many precious weeks, admiration of the skill so actively working his ruin, horror at the too tardy conviction of Lyderic's treachery—these were among the mass of combinations that his mind at once took in. He made his way through the throng.

Every tongue was in an instant hushed. Every eye fixed on him. He reached one of the flights of stairs hewn in the rocky foundation and leading to the vaults. By the light of the torches flaring far into these depths, he saw the flood wallowing in its own involutions, and marked the congregated proofs of destruction. He uttered not a word, but hastily turning round and rapidly gaining the court-yard, he gave his loud command that the whole force of the castle should at once turn out from the three portal gates, for a simultaneous attack on the village. A shout from every throat answered his command; and each officer and every man of the ready garrison seized their arms, and hurried to their various stations for assembling, all worked up to desperation by the frightful exigency of the case.

“A volunteer, to descend and examine the western front of the rocks!” were Count Ivon’s next words, during the bustling formation of the various dismounted platoons. The Moriscoe in-

stantly stepped forward, and a score others followed his movement.

“ Thanks, Aben Farez !” said Count Ivon, with a smile that would have repaid any one of his followers for any possible risk or sacrifice. “ Up with the rampart postern ; run the platform out ; steady the pulley bar ; quick, quick ! Grasp the rope firmly, Aben Farez ; discover what you can ; and tell me all !”

The small square postern on the rampart overlooking the river was immediately opened, a narrow platform shot out a few feet beyond the ridge, and a strong bar with a cord and pulley, formerly used for communications with the village, was quickly fixed above. Grasping firm hold of the rope with hands and legs, the Moriscoe swung out from off the platform, on which De Bassenveldt with Beatrice and one or two others stood, leaning over to the utmost verge, and listening for whatever words the adventurous volunteer might utter from his aërial point of observation. He was soon out of sight, for the rope slipping rapidly

over the projecting mass of granite, swung in again towards the face of the rock, giving him full power of observation on whatever went on below, and at the same time exposing him to the assaults of whatever missiles the enemy might direct against him.

“Holy Alla preserve him!” murmured Beatrice, shuddering as she gazed on the strong vibration of the rope.

“Hist, hist! he speaks!” whispered De Bas-senveldt, eagerly leaning forward, and striving to catch the sound of the Moriscoe’s voice through some moments’ pause in the cannon’s din. And a few broken sentences came indistinctly on the listener’s ear:—

“From the river to the rocks, all seems alive with huge and curious engines. Enormous snake-like tubes are writhing in sinuous motion up from the water’s edge. The soldiers all gaze on the works—the guards have left their arms—they see me and seem alarmed—now one levels his arque-

buss to fire at me—another—haul up, haul up ! Quick ! I have no more to tell.”

“ Up with him—quick, quick !” cried De Bas-senveldt and Beatrice together ; and both in their impatience seized the rope which several strong arms dragged rapidly across the pulley. But they were not fast enough to outspeed the enemy’s bullets. Two or three in quick succession whistled up into the air close to the platform’s edge ; and as the rope was wound rapidly up, harshly grating over the ridge of granite, full half its thickness was worn away. The Moriscoe’s peril made every heart thrill. He literally hung by a thread, which the slightest motion threatened to break. Yet his weight was evidently felt by all who pulled at the trembling and fragile cord. Another shot from below was heard in the bullet’s upward whiz ; and with it a quick jirk and an instant slackening of the rope told to the over-anxious group that the Moriscoe had quitted his hold and fallen below.

“ Holy Alla ! Holy Alla ! ” cried Beatrice, sinking into De Bassenveldt’s arms.

“ Haul up, haul up ! ” screamed Aben Farez from below the ledge of rock, against which he had only for a moment rested one of his feet, and by an instant slackening of his hold, recovered it with firmer nerve. A renewed pull from every sinewy arm, and a loud cheer of encouragement, answered the cry ; and in an instant more the turbaned head appeared. Another and another shot came up—the Moriscoe dropped one arm—he was hit ! Still one strong pull—his body reached the rough edge of the rock—another—he was clear above it, and safe from the enemy’s bullets—another still—and snap went the rope across ! All those who pulled it fell back with the shock ; and the falling Moriscoe, as he struck against the precipice’s edge, seized and clung to it in the rivetted grasp of despair. A scream burst from Beatrice, who in the horrid impulse was on the point of dashing herself forward, but was with-

held by one of the soldiers. In this moment De Bassenveldt, seizing the end of the broken rope, and twisting it strongly round his left wrist, threw himself across the platform's edge, and while the men above, in speechless fear held the remaining cordage strong and firm, he slid down the broken face of the rock, till he came close to the shuddering and almost exhausted Moriscoe.

“ Courage, courage !” cried he, as he stretched forth his hand, which the other dared not attempt to grasp, for had he loosened his hold and missed De Bassenveldt, he must have been infallibly precipitated down. His deliverer saw this, and by one steady clutch he caught the thick folds of his vest and tunic, and while those above who watched every movement, instantly hauled up again, De Bassenveldt touched from time to time the projecting points of rock, and was quickly on the platform, the worn out Moriscoe firmly held in his saving grasp. A hysteric shriek of joy from Beatrice was their double welcome ; and

they were both in an instant alternately clasped within her arms.

“ To the village ! to the village, my comrades ! ” cried De Bassenveldt, gently disengaging himself, and turning to the armed group which filled the courts. “ Death or Victory ! *must* now be our cry. Our only chance of safety is in the utter destruction of the enemy there. Desperation must nerve each arm. Out at every portal ! and one furious invincible rush will do the rest. Don Diego in the van—all others in their places ! On, on, to the charge ! ”

“ A Bassenveldt ! A Bassenveldt ! ” was the loud-sent answer from five hundred throats—and in a moment the tramp of a thousand heavy feet echoed on the rough pavement that led to the village below.

“ And now, artisans, for rapid work ! ” cried De Bassenveldt to some forgers and other mechanics who stood near. “ Clear away this end of rope, and sling a chain across the pulley—stand by me now a couple of ye—seize a hatchet each,

and give me one—we must descend by the chain cable below, even where this brave Moriscoe has already been, and cut through the leathern pipes which are carrying this tide of ruin into our strong hold. Quick, quick, my lads, let your hammers clink !”

And almost as speedily as the words were spoken the order was obeyed. The long, connecting chain, which lay on the rampart and bound several of the brass culverins to their carriages, was instantly unlinked and as quickly rivetted again, in the new position indicated by Count Ivon. A sharp-edged hatchet was placed in his hand, and several of the workmen pressed forward, anxious of the honour of being the companions of his perilous adventure. He chose the two next to him, and the Moriscoe insisted on being also joined in it. Count Ivon briefly remonstrated, on the score of his wounded arm ; but Aben Farez, baring the limb that Beatrice had just begun to bind with her torn scarf, convinced all those around that the hurt was slight,

and that it was only a momentary stunning of the nerves that had forced him to quit his hold of the rope. There was a peremptory anxiety in his request that Count Ivon could not resist; and Beatrice gave up her opposing entreaties, as her excited sympathy in the danger of the hour overcame the natural burst of feminine tenderness.

“ And I, De Bassenveldt, what can I do in this moment of general action? Must I stand here in ignoble safety, while all I hold dear is in danger like this?”

“ Yes, Beatrice, here is thy post—to watch over and direct the important duty of this windlass and pulley, on which thy brother and myself now hang our every hope—once safely landed below, I swear to return triumphant, or no more—to purge the village of our foes, and destroy their works, or perish without waiting the ruin they intend me! Stand steady and calm, my sweet friend—and when once we are below, remember that you look to her, who in the coming alarm

may need thy care more than I wish to dwell on. If I fall thou knowest what to say and do !”

Beatrice stifled the emotion that uprose at these words ; and De Bassenveldt took his position on a small narrow board which was passed through a link of the chain to support his feet ; his left hand grasped the chain, his right hand wielded the hatchet, his only weapon. The windlass was let loose, and he went gradually down, and just above his head a second little footboard was inserted, on which the Moriscoe placed himself in the same manner, his long bladed Spanish knife firmly held before him. A third and fourth board were successively placed at like distances, as the chain was gradually lowered, and the two volunteer workmen took their steady footing and hold. De Bassenveldt now rested on the outmost ledge of rock, over which he cast an anxious glance. In a minute or two loud shouts and the quick fire of musquetry were heard from below, and then De Bassenveldt called out to Beatrice and those on the platform,

“ Now, now, let us steadily down ; the smoke from the firing forms a shroud to hide us from view. Loose away ! loose away ! ”

The chain gradually rattled through the pulley, and the four gallant men were soon suspended over the scene of slaughter which the village now presented. The royalist force, taken quite unawares in the midst of their exultation at the prodigious efforts of the engineers and their machinery, hurried to their arms and defences in breathless confusion, but with unshaken courage. Don Diego Leonis and the other officers, heading the garrison troops with desperate fury, poured in from every arquebuss a thick discharge, and then rushed forward, pike and sword in hand. The royalists returned a scattered fire, and amidst the cloud of smoke rising and enveloping the face of the rock, De Bassenveldt found himself close to a small projection beside the opening, where three or four of the huge pipes were inserted. He caught by one foot on this landing-place, and a blow of his hatchet felled to the earth,

full fifty feet below, the mechanic who stood on the topmast bar of a ladder, and directed the application of the pipes. He next sprang against the rock, seized the readiest angle, and then moved closer to the aperture, making room for the Moriscoe. The first of the two workmen safely followed their movement, and clung to the rock ; but the last unfortunate fellow, slipping from his imperfect footing, was dashed headlong down, and met an instant death on the rugged basement below. De Bassenveldt and his remaining companions, by simultaneous and redoubled strokes, soon cut through the tough materials that formed the tubes, and cast them successively down, flaccid and innocuous. They next hacked at, and pulled away by main force, the plugs and wadding which had kept the pipes firm in the aperture ; and as they finally removed them a rush of water poured back from the surcharged cavities, and spouted down the rocks in a violent cascade.

De Bassenveldt could not now resist the impulse

that urged him to descend and join in the fierce *melée* which sent up its discordant tumult. Brandishing his hatchet, and forgetting in the heat of the moment every thing but the wild excitement of his courage, he stepped on the ladder, and with some words which his followers could not hear amidst the uprising din, he rapidly began his descent. The Moriscoe and his companion wanted no word of command; they followed close, but ere they were half way down, the ladder was forcibly pushed in the confusion below, and flung from its resting-place against the rock, while the three adventurers were cast violently to the ground. A moment's stunning sensation passed across De Bassenveldt, but he felt that his limbs were whole, and he bounded on his feet. Aben Farez was in an instant by his side. The workman lay insensible, not having had the good luck to fall, as they did, among the twisted leathern tubes which lay in providential coils, and completely broke the fall.

With blows of the hatchet, and stabs of the

knife dealt fiercely round, De Bassenveldt and the Moriscoe soon cleared their way through the astonished and half-beaten royalists; and reached the strong defence thrown up before the village towards the castle approaches. Shouting loudly "A Bassenveldt, liberty!" the war cries of the garrison—they fiercely attacked the crowded guard; and by an instance common in such kind of warfare, two men put hundreds to flight. Surprise and panic adding many imagined echoes to every shout thus sounding in their rear, through clouds of smoke, the royalists abandoned their whole line of defence, and rushed towards the river. Don Diego and his troops then bounded unopposed over every impediment, and gazed as on a miracle at their beloved chief, hailing them with cries of victory within the enemy's lines.

The remainder of the scene was more a butchery than a battle. A merciless pursuit went on, till every royalist was dead or disabled in the village street, or plunged into the stream. Réin-

forcements from the opposite banks were sent out in every disposable boat and raft, by the immediate command of Lyderic, who rode along the river's edge, frantic with rage and disappointment at the utter destruction which he saw to be going on in all Barochio's complicated works. But every effort was vain to effect any impression on the successful garrison. They maintained their well-won advantage, repulsing every attempt at landing, aided by the castle guns which played down on the assailants as they crossed the river, making dreadful havoc among each armed detachment. Dead bodies of those shot or drowned floated on the stream and choked the passage of the retreating boats. Darkness fell at length on the scene. Yet long continued discharges from the besieging batteries were idly spent against the heavy mound, rapidly thrown up by the victors, or against the rocks above; while every flash was a sure guide for the direction of the castle artillery, which kept up an incessant cannonade far into the depths of the night.

CHAPTER VI.

AT length the flashes and the thunder from rampart and battery became less and less frequent ; the wild tenants of the forest were no longer startled in their lair ; and the war-fiend seemed to yield to the general law of nature, which forces all things into the salubrity of sleep. But many an exception was to be found in the besiegers' camp—wounded wretches writhing with bodily pain, and mental sufferers tortured by the disgrace of defeat.

None among the latter felt the events of the

evening so acutely as Lyderic de Roulemonde. The reaction of his excited hopes was almost insupportable. He could scarcely believe that all the promised results of his own and Barochio's plans had been so utterly frustrated, even in the very hour of their triumphant development. Uncalculating as to the extent of mischief effected within the castle, his egotism could only dwell on its own partial disappointment ; for a selfish man, even in his revenge, is more alive to the agitation he endures than the pain he inflicts. Lyderic saw no longer in his grasp the glory of De Bassenveldt's conquest, the rewards it would secure him, the certainty of Theresa's and Beatrice's capture, and his double delight in their possession and humiliation. A few short hours before he had revelled in the anticipation of all this. Now its realization seemed impossible—so soon does a mean mind leap from doubt to despair.

If Trovaldo may be said to have felt at all on this occasion, his sensations were those of plea-

sure, at the failure of what appeared to him the inglorious means of conquest of which his second in command was alone to reap the honour. He had therefore taken no part in the proceedings of the evening, but staid aloof in his tent, leaving the attempts to regain the village wholly to Lyderic's direction. Had Trovaldo, in his boiling courage, headed the royalist attacks, their result might have been different, for many a wonderful effect has been produced by a general's personal exposure, from the day on which Alexander crossed the Granicus, to that when Wellington bore down at Waterloo *him* who had led on his fellow warriors across Arcola's bridge. Lyderic de Roulemonde was not of this stamp. He never shunned the danger that duty required him to risk. But he never sought it, in those moments of inspired imprudence which distinguish the hero from the mere machine, and raise war from the degradation of a trade to the grandeur of a passion.

Trovaldo paced the narrow limits of his tent,

and found even that extent too wide for him. Neither his mind nor body was fit to be at large. A heavy weight was still on his spirits, and he could scarcely even relish the depression of his discomfited lieutenant, who occupied a seat at the table. When Barochio's ten days' labours had appeared crowned with complete success, Trovaldo had, as in duty bound, immediately sent off a despatch to the archdukes. But its official coldness was strongly contrasted with the brief yet glowing bulletin which Lyderic forwarded by the same conveyance to his ministerial friend Don Zeronimo Zaputa, who had by some caprice of patronage, or for some private end, taken him firmly by the hand. It was a grievous task for Lyderic to pen a contradiction to the pæan he had so lately shouted. Yet such was imposed on him by Trovaldo, and he found it better to submit and soften the truth as he best might, than trust to Trovaldo's account of his unsuccessful operations. He felt conscious that he had not in the evening's emergency done

all that he might, and that the general in his place would have done. The consequent feeling in his mind was a rankling envy of that courage, the only quality in which Trovaldo was his superior. Had Lyderic but struck the balance fairly, how satisfied he might have been. But the envious never stop to compare or calculate advantages, although they can quickly multiply into a sum of discontent against others the myriads of their own insect deficiencies. Lyderic therefore worked himself up to hate this new object of dislike, solely from a consciousness of his own inferiority in one point; and he would fain have joined in the superstitious misgivings with which Don Juan was filled for himself.

“But no,” thought Lyderic, as he sat at the table composing the despatch, and followed with a sly side-glance Trovaldo’s restless movements in the tent; “no, that will not be. I cannot force my reason into an alliance with my wishes. Yet, who knows what I may not be able to effect, to

give reality to the fears of this gross grenadier? He stands in my way. How may I obviate the impediment? I cannot step over his head—but I might stride across his body! Fate may keep her promise of ill luck to him. Let him beware!”

Amidst these and other cogitations of a like dark nature, Lyderic finished the supplementary report, announcing the total failure and destruction of those ingenious and costly works, the success of which his letter of a few hours before had so boastfully proclaimed. He sealed up the despatch, and slipped into its enclosure a short private note to Zaputa, insinuating that his efforts to save the village and machinery were thwarted and defeated, less by the efforts of the rebels than the want of co-operation in the general-in-chief; but still promising final, if not prompt success, provided his plans were left to his own execution. An attendant aide-de-camp was now summoned, and directed to send off an immediate express; and the tramp of a horse's feet and clatter of its

rider's accoutrements, announced the prompt departure of a mounted dragoon.

“ Well,” said Trovaldo, as if for a moment relieved from the oppression that had weighed on him, “ well ! there goes the winding up of all this expensive and fruitless affair. That poor devil Barochio had all his pains, even the loss of his head, for nothing. We have sacrificed ten days, four hundred men, and ten times as many thousand florins—and gained what ? Defeat and disgrace ! But what better could have been looked for from such operations ? Who ever heard of a fortress falling like a galleon, from the depth of water in its hold ? Let then this unworthy experiment suffice—let our cannons batter their walls—let the breach be made, and the assault given—let me carry this castle at the head of my brave fellows, or die in the attempt—if, indeed, I am not doomed to fall in a less glorious way !”

And here the dark cloud of despondency seemed again to hang over the general.

“ Don Juan,” replied Lyderic, with a spiteful

suppression of his resentment, “you will no doubt act as best beseems you as long as you command here; but—”

“As long as!” exclaimed Trovaldo, a latent spark of his natural impetuosity bursting through the gloom. “What does that expression mean? Who may set a term to my command? What meddling minister would step between me and my sovereign? Is an old soldier, covered with wounds, to be made the sport of fawning courtiers and intriguing boys? Who dares to interfere with my orders?”

“I know not,” said Lyderic, calmly, “if this fierce catechism be meant for me—but I have at least no intention to answer it. Insinuations against their highness’ ministers may best be addressed to Brussels.”

“Let them go there, what care I? You may report my words, as you contravene my wishes. I am but a subaltern in my own army—the very pioneers hold higher influence. It is all your doing, Baron Roulemonde!”

“Nay, nay, Don Juan,” said Lyderic, in a smooth tone, “you do me wrong, and yourself injustice; but I see you are in a wayward mood to-night, and these injuries must pass.”

“Have you not threatened me with the loss of my command?”

“What can have given you such a notion, Don Juan? I said, ‘as long as you hold it.’ Is life then eternal? May not Barochio’s fate be yours, or mine, or any man’s to-morrow?”

“Some men, Baron Roulemonde, take better care of the heads on their shoulders than others on whose death they speculate; there is certainly promotion for us all, and I may not stand long in your way.”

“Don Juan, this is too bad; you do me wrong. I have not provoked these retorts—I said nothing—”

“You *looked* it, Sir, and that is worse. Deeds or words I can bear, aye, and pay back,” said Trovaldo, striking the hilt of his rapier; “but by the blood of the martyrs, I cannot, and *will*

not be worn away by sneers and sarcasms ! So speak out, Baron Roulemonde, if you have aught to say—if not, good night !”

“ You give small relish to our conference, Don Juan,” said Lyderic, rising and taking up his hat, and biting his lips, in a way that might have told a keen observer the agitation he writhed under ; “ you declaim against sarcasm, but do not disdain its use.”

“ I disdain all underhand work, Baron Roulemonde ; I am straight forward in all I say or do,” cried Trovaldo, again striking his sword with rising violence, at observing Lyderic’s composure, not being able to discriminate between the unruffled calm of dignity, and the nervous dissimulation of cunning.

“ This must not go farther, Don Juan,” said Lyderic ; “ my duty commands me to have no personal feelings now. I take my leave, and await your orders for the morrow. But bear in mind, I now propose to you, that instead of wasting time and ammunition in persevering to batter a mass of

immoveable rock, our whole force be employed to regain the village. That once again in our possession, the castle is at our mercy ; for though our late proceedings have failed—no matter how or wherefore—we have still the means of introducing into yonder cavities and vaults, materials that may soon communicate with the magazines, and by a well-placed train and a single match, blow the garrison to atoms. I have done *my* duty—you best know *yours*. Good night !”

“And is that the way you perform our compact, Baron Roulemonde ?” said Trovaldo, hoarse with suppressed rage, and stalking up to Lyderic as he was about to quit the tent. “Have you forgotten private promises, as well as personal feelings ? Has Beatrice ceased to exist ? and, in your plan of wholesale destruction, do you forget that her safety and my possession of her were the conditions that raised you to the station you hold ?”

“I hold it by my sovereigns’ favour, and hope

to keep it by my own merit. As to individual objects, they must take their chance," answered Lyderic, coldly, and still inclining towards the door of the tent.

"Hold!" cried Trovaldo, fiercely grasping him by the arm, "stir not an inch, or by the army of saints, I strike you dead at my foot! What! do you dare to treat me thus? Me, who have placed you where you are; who have sought for *you* rank and honour that I would scorn to seek for myself? Me—"

"Softly, softly, Don Juan! Had you been able to shift without me, or carry your views alone, the prison of Bruges had been my lot. You may deceive *yourself*, not *me*—and our first interview together might have told you I am not to be bullied. Then be advised—abate this ill-judged fury—let not those without suppose dissension between us. Let us run our course clearly—together, all objects may be gained—separate, we have no chance."

“Do you then hold to our compact?” said Trovaldo, brought to a rapid check by the plain and unanswerable truths of Lyderic’s speech.

“To be sure I do,” replied the latter.

“And Beatrice must be mine?”

“Ay, if we can save her.”

“If! Can you then calculate in cold blood the chance of her destruction?”

“Life is but a game of chance, Don Juan,” replied Lyderic, with a sneer.

“Let fate, then, stand neuter, and the game may still be mine!” muttered Trovaldo, after a pause. Then striking his breast, he added, in an unconscious reverie, “This may be a mere weakness. Let me but master it. I am the sport of passion—its plaything.” He then waved his hand to Lyderic, with the haughty air in which he had been wont to motion his slave. Lyderic retired; and calling to the group of soldiers who formed his personal escort, he walked rapidly and silently to his own tent, which lay at some hundreds of yards distance from that of the general-in-chief.

Trovaldo, thus left alone, came instantly to that uncomfortable state of calm which, in men like him, follows the reflux of a flood of anger. Self-dissatisfaction, and something like self-contempt is its natural consequence, in minds which are too narrow to see beyond their own operations. But the passionate man who, in his moments of reason, can examine the character of others, will probably be satisfied that in their frigid endurance there is little less weakness and certainly more suffering than in his violence. The whirlpools and eddies of rage suppressed are less elevated and more painful than its hurricane gusts. There is, too, a moral grandeur in the tempest of passion, which leaves a more splendid serenity behind it, and brings a thousand kindly influences to the surface of the breast, that lie for ever latent in that which throbs with insipid regularity. Let then the passionate man bear with his own infirmity, nor thwart the natural tendency to self-esteem, by envying those whose disquietudes rankle in the heart, but never, by a wholesome

overflow, clear off "the perilous stuff," that honey-combs it to the core.

Had Trovaldo been capable of this comparison, he had not looked after Lyderic and in upon himself with such self-disparagement as he now did. As it was, nothing could be more mortifying than his feelings, left alone with the sentiment of his own littleness, and quite at the mercy of the superstitious gloom that had so heavily oppressed him. The night was thoroughly dark, except where the watch-fires threw fitful gleams on the swart faces of the cloak-wrapped sentinels, or brought the flame-coloured branches of the trees into glaring relief. A heavy rain pattered on the tents as the canvas gradually tightened with the moisture ; and the cords now and then, from over-tension, snapped their pegs from the earth. A busy hum was kept up along the river's edge, by the constant challenging of the sentries, the murmuring of the patroles, the neighing and trampling of the horses picketed through the lines, or the dismal moanings from the hospital huts erected

in the rear. But all this was the monotony of silence, compared to the day-noises of the late tremendous scenes, and Trovaldo had never before suffered such a sense of desolateness. He had, previous to his conference with Lyderic, dismissed his attendants ; and also, as was usual with him at night, the sentry from the duty of pacing before his tent ; for he piqued himself on his relaxations of mere personal etiquette, and gave many such indulgences to the troops, by which, joined to his intrepid conduct, he had largely gained their favour. He now felt a passing inclination to recal the sentry to his post, and longed for the sound of his footsteps as a sort of companionship. He had resolved to summon one of his attendants from their quarters close by. But shame withheld him from demanding any unusual duty in so dreary a night ; and he withdrew into the tent, closing behind him the triangular flap that formed its door. He then passed with two or three strides along the outer compartment, and drew back the curtain that divided it from the inner space which

contained his simple bed, a couch of leather tightly stretched between two wooden bars, with a hard stuffed cushion for his head, and a thickly quilted camlet coverlid. Three or four rude stools, a desk, and a couple of tables, completed the furniture of this tent, which formed a striking contrast to the splendid decorations of many a modern marquee.

Trovaldo unbuckled his belt, and laid his rapier aside, with his short cloak and surcoat, loosened the ruff from his neck, and wrapped his loose roquelaure around him. He threw a disdainful glance on the plans and sketches of the late machinery and its proposed operations, which had been traced by the unfortunate Barochio, and still lay scattered on the table at which he had that day sat in close conference with the two commanders. There was nothing there to give an amiable turn to Trovaldo's murky thoughts. Books he despised, and of course did not possess. But, like most of the military serving in the low countries, he had acquired the habitual use of tobacco ; and he now

drew forth his clay pipe and cannister from a drawer of his desk, filled the tube, lighted the weed, and lay down on his leathern stretcher. He did not close his eyes, having no inclination to turn his thoughts inward; but he for some time amused himself (as many a man of more mind has often done in a like situation) by puffing the tobacco smoke at the insects which the moisture of the earth sent crawling up on the canvas and the bed-curtains, and which fell thickly down, suffocated by the overpowering fumes.

When no more of these enemies were left alive, and the tent was comfortably filled with the fragrant vapour, Trovaldo laid his empty pipe on the stool beside him, and taking from his breast the miniature of Beatrice, which always hung suspended by a steel chain round his neck, he gazed at it for a few minutes with grim sternness, stroking his beard the while. Then, with a hoarse and hollow exclamation of mixed admiration and anger, he replaced it under his doublet; and turning the lamp on the round marble table that

stood within his reach, he left himself in shade, folded his arms, allowed his heavy eyelids to close, and strove to encourage the approach of sleep. A perturbed doze stole over him, and he lay in a middle state of sensation, the pattering of the rain being the medium that kept him balanced between the indistinctness of waking and slumber. He several times started up, and looked anxiously towards the tent door, but he only saw the shadow of chair or table along the rush-strewn floor, and the canvas flaps, agitated gently by the night breeze. He leant on his elbow and listened. The rain above him was the only sound, besides the occasional noises before mentioned, and again and again he sank into his broken rest.

Once more he awoke—but he did not now, as on the former occasion, start up and cast a quick glance around him. A curdling thrill crept through him, and though instantaneously awake, he felt paralyzed, he could not open mouth or eye, nor lift his head from its hard pillow; but his head throbbed fiercely, for he clearly felt a

low breathing close to his face, and heard a slight rustling sound of drapery beside him. By a desperate exertion of the will, he faintly raised his lids, while the eye-balls under them felt as though glazed in their sockets. By that imperfect glance Trovaldo saw enough to make him shake with horror. A figure bent over him, which his worst fears confirmed to be the same that had haunted him by its passing appearance the previous night; the dress, the size, the contour of the face, dimly shone on by the lamp's inverted ray, all combined to identify the injured and murdered chieftain, Hemeya, the father of Beatrice, as Trovaldo had last seen him falling beneath his sword, for his tunic and vest were covered with blood.

A cold and clammy shower of perspiration burst from Trovaldo's forehead, his joints rattled as he lay, and tons of pressure could not have more firmly held him down than did his excessive fear. His leaden gaze was rivetted on the figure, for he could not now even shut out the horrid view,

as it raised a glittering blade and stood in the attitude of striking. Trovaldo heaved his panting chest, as if to meet the death-blow threatened by the phantom ; and the paroxysm of his terror was complete when his name seemed to pass from its lips, in a hollow, half-articulate sound.

“ Trovaldo, Trovaldo !” said the figure, and a tremulous movement of the uplifted arm accompanied the call—“ Trovaldo ! I cannot kill thee sleeping—but awake, rise up, and die !”

At this summons, the gaunt form of Don Juan, as if inspired by some magical effect, did spring electrically up ; when a blow of the dagger instantly struck his breast, and made him sink recumbent on the couch. The enamelled portrait which lay on his neck received the blade, and turned its point as it was shivered with the stroke. Trovaldo, at once recovering the amplest energy of his courage, with the conviction that it was a mortal voice that roused and a human arm that struck him, bounded unhurt upon his feet, and grappling his assailant with both hands, he dashed

him to the earth ; and then dropping on one knee beside him, he held him by the throat, looked fiercely upon his writhing countenance, and burst into his own peculiar yell of coarse invective and triumphant laughter.

“ What ! *thou* ! dog—renegade—slave—Gaspar ! Thou, in this mummer’s garb ! Thou think to do death to thy master ! Ha, ha, ha, ha ! ” and then rising and letting go his hold, he spurned with his foot the body that lay crouching beneath him.

It was, indeed, the Moriscoe, who, worked to fury by his sister’s recital of Trovaldo’s conduct to her, had thus for two successive nights contrived to cross the river and steal into the Spanish camp ; availing himself of the facilities allowed by the general’s well known habits, to reach the entrance of his tent on one occasion, and into its very recesses on the other. He felt but half enfranchised while Trovaldo lived, and even as though the death-blow dealt by any hand but his, would have rivetted his bonds in baulking his re-

venge. Hovering round the tent, wrapped in a cloak, and hidden in the gloom, he had overheard the conference between Don Juan and Lyderic, and had patiently waited till the hoarse breathing of his intended victim proclaimed him sunk into that helpless state, during which he had so often watched by the couch he now meant to steep in blood. He entered cautiously, drew his dagger, and prepared to strike; but even while his arm was uplifted, the awakened sense of his long debasement seemed to paralyze both the nerve and the will. He thought it was generosity that made him pause—but it was downright fear, the slavish remnant of former degradation, which the counteraction of revenge was insufficient to overcome. For the dagger of an assassin to be unerring requires a higher impetus than private feeling. Brutus and all the homicides of history struck home, because the fanaticism of public motives urged the steel; such blows are almost always mortal, while mere domestic murderers falter and fail oftener than they succeed.

“ Wretch !” continued Trovaldo, looking scornfully down, “ and was this abortion of a would-be murder the ill I foolishly shrunk from ? How I would have laughed at Fate, as I do now, had I known that *thou* wert to be its agent !”

Gaspar, as we must now again call him, shorn of the honours of his brief season of freedom, seemed overwhelmed by the enormity of the daring that led him on. As he lay under Trovaldo’s glance he quailed and shrunk. Instinct for a moment prompted him to rise on his knees—but innate pride and lately imbibed notions of high feeling restrained the grovelling impulse, and he only sullenly turned half round, supporting himself on one hand ; and looking in mixed awe and loathing on Trovaldo, he said,

“ Tyrant, this blow has failed—the bad spirit that watches over you is not yet ready to take you, or you had not escaped. But wait awhile. Your hour will soon come round. Another hand remains to repeat the blow ! Now fill up the list of your wrongs to my race—plunge your rapier

here, as you did in my father's breast—avenge his shade, and my miserable mother's, and my still living sister who has baffled your villainy;—avenge them all on this recreant heart, which throbbed with a false sense of honour, and palsied the hand that should have dealt the death-blow while you slept! Strike! rid me of a now hateful life!”

“ Reptile! thinkest thou I would stain my pure Toledo with thy helot blood! Throw away thy dagger—rise—follow me to thy fate!” vociferated Trovaldo, in his tyrant tone.

“ You will not! Thus then I do the deed!” cried the Moriscoe, raising himself on one knee and drawing back his right arm; and the dagger's point had actually entered the folds of his vest, with a force that would have sent it deep into his heart, when Trovaldo grasped the wrist, wrenched away the weapon, and dragged the intended suicide up on his legs again.

“ Insolent dog!” exclaimed Don Juan, with a look of scorn and mockery. “Durst thou rob

the rack of its prey, and me of my slave?—A guard ho!” And as an officer and a few file of men hastily came into the tent, he handed over the struggling culprit, with orders that made even their rough natures shudder. Look, soldiers, on this Mahomedan dog! this slave, that would have murdered me! Take him hence—rivet a chain to his leg—and fasten it by a staple to the outer face of the north battery. Let him writhe and wriggle there in the heat of the cannonade. Let the rebel bullets tear him limb by limb, or some chain-shot cut him across—I give him that chance of a ready death, and spare him the torture of the rack! Away with him!”

These orders were instantly obeyed; and as the guards retired with their prisoner, Trovaldo strode backwards and forwards with a free and rapid air, in front of his tent. He felt as though a mountain's weight were shaken from his breast. In recovering possession of Gaspar he seemed to have regained his own liberty, for a despot de-

prived of his slave feels himself reduced to negative thralldom ; an object for tyranny is a want of his mind, and there is no bondage like imagined wants.

“ Now let our work go on ! I am once more my own master—free—fearless—and invincible ! Away with doubt—I scorn danger—I spurn difficulty, even as I scorned and spurned yon dastard ! ” Thus did Trovaldo vapour in the midnight gloom, while his obedient guardsmen placed the manacled slave in the perilous position he had ordered : and the sounds of the mallets, fastening down the stake to which he was chained, echoed hollowly against the earthen mound of the battery, and in the mouths of the guns which stood out from the embrasures above his head.

CHAPTER VII.

Our readers will now, perhaps not unwillingly, turn a reverting glance from those scenes of outward tumult, to the less boisterous agitations of the castle within, where our heroine has been, for a full fortnight, left to the endurance of her conflicting anxieties.

What she suffered on the first two days of her captivity was but little relieved during those which followed, for a perpetual state of suspense and mystery kept alive the inquietude so actively awakened. We last left her, flying from the pic-

ture gallery to the refuge of her own apartment. But when the loud 'larums of the day had subsided, Theresa felt a state of analogous repose insensibly stealing on her. Seated at her bedroom window once more, she gazed out on the beautiful moonlight scene; and a sympathetic tone of composure gradually blended with her fevered thoughts. Reverting rapidly to all that had passed in the eventful week, astonished at the multiplicity of feelings brought at once into life, and of events springing up around her, all the acuteness of suffering which had accompanied each shifting change was absorbed in the mellow composure of her present state. She leant on the casement and looked out on the moon-lit indistinctness of the landscape, touched in all its lines and edges with the silvery tinge of fairy land. The very shadows were traversed with a filmy light which neutralized the gloom; and the whole aspect of external nature harmonized with, if it did not create, the complacency of Theresa's breast. Her eyes turned instinctively towards

the high walls of the Wizard's Tower, a part of which projected into the court-yard and was visible close to her casement ; and she listened with tremulous anxiety for the promised sounds of that voice which was sure to penetrate the recesses of her heart. And at length it came faintly on, stealing, as it were, along each curve and angle of the massive walls that intervened between the tower and the body of the castle, and making musical the very stones which echoed its whispered melody. Again it came in a quicker and bolder swell, as if it flew at once from the singer's to the listener's heart, and the space between seemed to vibrate to its winged harmony. Then its cadences died away, and again returned, and sported and fluttered about, till the whole body of ambient air thrilled in eddies of sweet sound. Theresa listened, and wept, unconscious of her tears.

“ Oh, how divinely satisfied I feel !” exclaimed she, when at length her thoughts became centred, and she regained the power of utterance.

“ How reassured that all is right—how confident of happiness at last ! Can these tones flow from a bosom capable of dishonour and deceit ? Could this heart respond to a mean lover or a base imposter ? No ! his innate worth and my inherent pride are surety for us both. How weak, how criminal I have been, to sink under other influences, to let my mind be worked on by aught but his. How flimsy and false is all this glare of glory, this pride of rank. Could the whole line of this haughty race shew one to equal *him* in tenderness and truth ? Oh, he is true and tender ! The faintest sound of his voice has the magic of sincerity—and that is the spell by which he has won and shall wear this heart in his. But into what perils is he about to plunge ? What risk does he mean to run, to mark his right to what is by Nature’s gift, by reason’s confirmation, his own ! He claims a trial of my faith. ’Tis just that he should ; for has not this frail bosom throbbed with a shaken allegiance ? But I will prove its fidelity, let temptations assail me in what form they may. Let Beatrice trumpet

forth the praises of her idol, let even that idol,—let De Bassenveldt's self appear, when he will, in what guise he may, in what season he chooses—not even that shall move this true heart more, if indeed it be not to add a ten-fold force to the devotion with which I consecrate it to Lambert Boonen !”

She turned round into her chamber, as she concluded this half uttered reverie—but shrunk back into the recess of the window, and pressed nervously, almost convulsively, against the wall, on discovering a figure enveloped in dark drapery, standing close to where she had sat, but far enough from the casement to be out of the stream of moonlight, poured in under the overhanging arch that shaded the lattice work. All behind was gloom, for Theresa saw that the lamp was extinguished. Her first sensation was fear—but an instant changed it into another that she dared not analyze, lest she might find it to be pleasure. We hope our readers will not condemn these rapid shiftings of the mind. Let them recollect the

avowed leaning of Theresa's to the vague and romantic, and the whole mass of opinions and sentiments which she had imbibed relative to De Bassenveldt, and they may imagine what she now felt again, in the certainty that he was once more beside her.

As she gazed, the figure respectfully withdrew, using the same kind of valedictory gesture she had observed the preceding night—and Theresa could not conceal from herself that she wished, hoped, longed for the too lingering avowal which Beatrice had led her to expect, and which circumstances seemed imperatively to require from De Bassenveldt's own lips.

“ Oh, that he would now speak out, definitively and distinctly, that I might at once avow the deep passion which neither his pride nor generosity would allow him to combat, that I might tell him how I honour him—and love Lambert Boonen !”

So thought Theresa ; but the figure silently and slowly moved away towards the secret door, and even then, by one of those indefinable shiftings of

thought, which baffle calculation, an idea flashed across her—a something between hope and belief—that the apprentice himself had, by some arrangement with Beatrice, acquired means of ingress to her chamber, and that it was actually he who now paid her this mysterious visit, gazing on her and blessing her, without breaking his pledge to leave her uninfluenced by him. Not caring to acknowledge that his presence even in silence was a virtual violation of that pledge, she was on the point of rushing forward towards him, and his name was on her half-open lips, when movement and utterance were both arrested by the renewed warbling of her lover's well-known voice, coming directly from the Wizard's Tower and across the court, in direct repetition of the strains which had just before so powerfully affected her. Her hands fell, by a spontaneous movement clasped across her bosom, as if the embodied spirit of the music had sought shelter and found it there.

The mysterious visitor slowly withdrew by the private door, and Theresa gazed for a minute into

the vacant gloom ; then turned round to the casement again, and gave herself up to the delicious effect caused by her lover's voice, happy in the consciousness of his triumph over his powerful rival in this actual struggle for influence.

“ No !” said she unconsciously aloud, as the last stanza of the roundelay died away—“ No, as long as one tone of that voice can make itself heard, I have nought to fear—I am *his* beyond the reach of temptations greater than those which assail me. Fear not, Lambert, for me or thyself ; I am thine for ever, in life or death !”

“ Death !” said the echo from the Wizard's Tower, with a tone of subtle whispering not uncommon elsewhere, but peculiar to its walls as compared with other parts of the building, and which had long ranked among the mysterious attributes it was supposed to inherit from the dark being from whom its title was acquired. Theresa could not help shuddering, as her closing vow was thus sent back ; and it was only by its ominous repetition, she was aware that she had made even

echo the confidant of her thoughts. But she scarcely regretted their involuntary utterance, in the hope that they had reached the ears of him who had inspired them. The following morning was ushered in by a crash of warfare, to which the light skirmish of the previous day was child's play. Theresa's and Madame Marguerite's apartments were sheltered from all danger, and quite apart from the scene of conflict. And often did our heroine contrast the exquisite beauty of the prospect from her casement to the southward, with those which the castle's western windows commanded. Swelling hills, covered with graceful woods, rich meadows, a smooth river, fantastic rocks, the distant town and church of Dinant, with its mixture of cupola and spire, and the imposing mass of granite rock standing high in its rear, formed the features of the scene which Theresa saw daily lighted by the meridian sun. But when he sloped towards his evening bed, he shone on the animated but revolting combinations of science and slaughter already described ; and day after day,

as Theresa looked out on the quiet face of Nature, her ears were assailed by the incongruous accompaniments of art's most discordant sounds.

But habit, Nature's second self, quickly familiarized her with all this; and ere many days elapsed, she slept as soundly through the thunder of the morning guns, as the roughest cannoneer who lay stretched on the stones beside them.

As incessant as the fire from culverin and falconet, was the gentle assault kept up against Theresa's heart by the enthusiastic Beatrice, who lost no opportunity of urging Count Ivon's suit, while a continued discharge of the small shot of perseverance was kept up by Madame Marguerite for the same object. Lest this change in the good dame's tactics should surprise our readers, we must inform them that it was effected entirely through the medium of Lieutenant Gallagher, who deep in the confidence, and warm in the interest of his gallant colonel, had insinuated himself with marvellous speed into the good graces of the widow, for the sole purpose of winning her over to

De Bassenveldt's object. This was most probably Count Ivon's own plan. Its execution however was admirable ; for Gallagher eminently possessed a share of that mealy-mouthedness, an indigenous quality of the Irish character, which existed even then, before the introduction of the prolific root to the influence of which it is in our day commonly ascribed. And Madame Marguerite, yielding to the irresistible blarney of the sport-loving lieutenant, was readily persuaded of Lyderic's baseness and Ivon's merits ; and she brought all her volubility into play to persuade Theresa, as if such fluency could ever become influence, or as though Theresa was of the same mould with those who are worn into a purpose by the mere dribbling of talk. Father Jerome, too, entrusted with Count Ivon's views by the worthy widow, (for she and the priest had anticipated the modern satirist, and "sworn eternal friendship" on two days' intimacy,) came forward on all occasions as a volunteer in his patron's cause, and told Theresa many a true story of his generosity and courage. But

De Bassenveldt's best auxiliaries for gaining ground in her favour, were the constantly recurring proofs of his high and valorous mind, and of the unbounded influence he possessed on all those around him. Hundreds of human beings seemed to rest in devoted subserviency to him, and to be kept in it by a sway as gentle as it was irresistible. Theresa, arguing from natural logic, was satisfied that such effects could not follow an unworthy cause; and her admiration of De Bassenveldt was thus fostered by every extraneous and internal aid.

Each new day now brought some new conflict, and added to the infuriate rancour of besiegers and besieged. It has been seen that the former had gained gradual advantages, as is ever the case when a strong place is assailed by an adequate and determined force. Defence can be prolonged but to a certain point. Works must, with time, be battered down, provisions consumed, and garrisons worn away. All that is to be looked for is to keep off the fatal day of surrender to the latest

possible period. In the present instance every thing gave evidence of such a course ; and every tongue within the castle was loud in the praises of its heroic chief, of whose deeds of skill, valour, and perseverance every eye was witness.

During the whole of this terrible interval, the lady prisoners were treated in a way so distinguished and delicate, that but for the crash of artillery, the shouts of battle, and the groans of pain, too often borne to their ears, they might have supposed their entertainment the result of profound peace. Their table was served with luxury, and their wants profusely cared after ; while Father Jerome was their constant companion, for propriety's sake, and Lieutenant Gallagher their frequent visitor, to cheer them by his vivacity, and encourage them by his boldness. He was selected for this duty by his chieftain, from his pre-eminent possession of these and the other qualifications, for which we have already given him credit. None other of the officers approached the ladies' apartments, rather to the dissatisfaction of

Madame Marguerite, but at Theresa's especial entreaty, addressed to Beatrice. A small courtyard, planted round with lime trees and acacias, and confined within the high walls of the building, was wholly allotted to their use. No windows looked into it, save their own, and one or two small grated casements of the Wizard's Tower; and not even from the latter could Theresa discover (as she would well have liked) one eye intruding on their hours of exercise and privacy.

Had she but caught an occasional glance of watchful tenderness, she would have felt it a support to her constancy, more than enough to counteract every opposing influence. But she had not now even the sounds of her lover's voice to come to her aid; for after a couple of night serenades, such as those we have described, the singing was heard no more, and Theresa was left in a desolate waste of doubt. She was now certain that the apprentice was gone forth on some bold and hazardous exploit; and when she attempted to gain information from Beatrice, the latter's ambiguous

words alternately confirmed and weakened her belief; and at length gave her the startling notion that Lambert Boonen was removed beyond all communication with her by the jealous intervention of De Bassenveldt. In her conversations with Beatrice, the latter freely admitted Count Ivon's knowledge of the apprentice's passion; but she ever spoke of it in a way so contemptuous, as opposing an obstacle to his success, that Theresa could scarcely imagine him to have used any harsh or unfair means of riddance against a rival so beneath him in all the commonly-supposed qualifications for conquest. Yet the cessation of those nightly melodies, so painfully replaced by Beatrice's doubtful tone, excited for awhile an alarm that she vainly attempted to combat by such reasoning. But her disquiet found relief in the steady and encouraging assurances of Nona, who had freely avowed to her young mistress that she was from the first the confidant of the apprentice's designs, and of the prior's as well; and being, as she added, convinced that Theresa's

happiness was inseparably joined with Lambert Boonen's, she cheered every failing hope, and strengthened each wavering sentiment that might bear attaint against his fidelity or her own. Theresa, long aware of Nona's devotion to the prior, of his attachment to his nephew, and of that nephew's passion for herself, saw in all the natural links of a fair and honourable purpose, but nothing whatever of duplicity ; so completely does one's own secret inclination form the key-note to the accordant circumstances which take their tone from it. Thus supported, Theresa felt herself still able to maintain the internal conflict between her sworn affection against all opposing excitements ; and she lay down at night and rose in the morning with unshaken faith. At the same time, her reliance on De Bassenveldt's delicacy, and her admiration of his heroism, gained hourly strength ; and she as much loved to hear his praises during the day, as to wait for and watch those regular nocturnal visitings which brought, instead of alarm or

doubt, increasing conviction of strict honour and protection.

Theresa's anxiety for her father's safety was by no means absorbed by her personal feelings ; but it was much abated by the considerations formerly detailed, and by renewed advices obtained from Brussels in the early days of the castle's siege, that De Bassenveldt's missive, shot into the city by the strong armed bowman, had secured the most honourable treatment to the still imprisoned burgomaster. His complicity with his apprentice, his serving man, and Renault Claassen, in Theresa's escape from Assembourg-house, was known only to himself ; and her avowed seizure by De Bassenveldt, while it strengthened his security of fair treatment, for which the Provost of Flanders was held hostage, brought the best consolation for her temporary loss, in the assurance that she was in the custody of him whom of all others he preferred for her protector and future husband. This much of her father's situation and sentiments was

made known to her by Beatrice, as the sum of intelligence gained through Count Ivon's active emissaries. But the rapid and close blockade of the castle soon cut off all possibility of further advices; and Theresa's filial anxiety, deprived of a channel for direct gratification, could only find relief in constant inquiries after the recovering health of the half-burned and safely-tended provost, on whose safety she felt her father's in a great measure dependant; and who therefore required a double share of her attention, from the union of natural benevolence with that still stronger feeling of even the kindest natures—self-regard.

While the provost was thus carefully held hostage for Van Rozenhoed, his former fellow-sufferer and mutilated lieutenant, Louis Drankaert, was freely allowed to choose his own course. He accordingly repaired to the town of Nimeguen on the Meuse, which held firm in its allegiance to the archdukes, and formed the main object of enterprise to the fierce activity of Martin Schenck, who had quickly taken possession of

the strong fort which bore his own name two leagues distant on the right bank of the same river, where he had entered on a system of rapine and ravage, of which Lieutenant Gallagher had given a brief but harrowing sketch in his conversation with Madame Marguerite on the heights of Groenendale. The scattered bands of Picaroons gradually entered into either service of the conflicting parties. Royalists and patriots obtained in them ready recruits and practised soldiers; but none of the commanders found them so effective as Martin Schenck, whose discipline was the edge of the sword. As long as information of the movements of friends and foes could be conveyed into the castle, Theresa obtained her full share of it, through the medium of Beatrice, Gallagher, and the chaplain; but after the expiration of a week, all those within the walls were left in ignorance of whatever was passing out of their sight, and thrown wholly on the one great purpose of their own defence. And thus matters went on, till the memorable evening of Barochio's death

on which such stirring feats were enacted, and which made such important changes in the plans and prospects of besiegers and besieged. The tumult within the garrison has been already described, as well as the successful efforts to arrest the progress of the mischief which it was impossible to repair. But it is more difficult to depict the consternation which seized on the thronged population, when informed of the ruin of such a vast and important part of the subsistence on which the defence of the castle depended. For it was not merely the pure waters of the Meuse that had been projected with such prodigious effect by Barochio's powerful constructions, the too cunning engineer having forced the subservient stream to pass through and amalgamate with reservoirs of atrocious mixtures, not poison properly so called, but matter full as noxious, which, blending with flour, meal, corn, wine, and rubbish of all sorts, formed a mass of abomination, that would have defied the whole powers of chemistry and thou-

sands of its professors to reduce to its original elements. When De Bassenveldt, after the splendid exertions of valour and judgment so bravely seconded by his officers and men, found himself once more master of the village and the whole of the contested space on the right bank of the river, he felt the painful certainty, on returning to the castle, that, without aid from Prince Maurice, he possessed no possible means of subsistence for its inmates for even another month. One method of relief was indeed practicable for a chief of another mould than De Bassenveldt, and has been practised ere then, and since—the driving out old men, women, and children, those helpless incumbrances, to die on the enemy's pikes, or perish by famine in the woods, but such a thought never entered his mind ; and if any of his officers conceived it, they knew him too well to venture its suggestion. All, however, that prudence could do, consistent with humanity, was effected in this extremity.

The mere conception and arrangement of the

various busy measures occupied Count Ivon the whole of the night on which they first became necessary ; and amply was that night employed by every individual in the castle, all partaking the trouble and care it gave birth to, with perhaps the exception of Madame Marguerite, who saw no cause for either, in aught that now happened, being soothed into perfect serenity by the lullaby of Lieutenant Gallagher's palaver.

We need scarcely attempt to explain the variety of Theresa's emotions, during the rapid communications she received from Beatrice of the events of the evening and night, from the time of De Bassenveldt's and the Moriscoe's descent down the face of the rock, till midnight had brought a cessation of the harrowing sounds of external conflict and inward alarm. One only inquiry, ardently and tremblingly put, broke in upon the spoken bulletins thus constantly addressed by Beatrice :

“ And where, oh where, is Master Boonen in

all this terrible tumult? Is he absent—is he inactive in this moment of general vigour? Is he, oh, is he safe?”

“Your lover, my sweet friend, bears his part in this trying hour. You shall not have to blush for, even though you be doomed to mourn him!” was Beatrice’s brief reply, at once agitating and consoling. For despite Theresa’s anxious efforts to be reconciled to the apprentice’s hitherto unwarlike course, the vivid spirit of the times worked in her ardent character, and though Beatrice’s words conveyed a distinct impression of her lover’s exposure to the common danger, she was reconciled to his being so, assured of his being near her, in preference to a chance of his safety in the vague hazards of absence.

Beatrice alone was doomed to the keen sufferings of suspense for the being most dear to her by natural ties ; for she, and she alone, was the confidant, as she had been the mover, of her brother’s desperate undertaking. She had not dared to impart

it to De Bassenveldt, knowing how a projected assassination would have revolted him. But she panted with anxiety to learn that the blow was struck, which would rid Count Ivon of a powerful enemy and revenge her own and her parent's wrongs ; and at the same time she shuddered with dread of the Moriscoe's failure, which she felt to be another word for his agonised death. She watched through the whole night for his return to the castle ; and the first dawn of morning saw her on the rampart platform, striving with keen gaze to pierce through the morning mists into the Spanish camp.

While Beatrice thus watched through the moonless hours, and listened to catch the sound of her brother's returning steps among the noises of the night, the manacled Moriscoe stood, fastened like some victim at the altar of sacrifice, a prey to the anguish of disappointment, disgrace, and anticipated death. The chain which held Gaspar's leg was of sufficient length to admit of his lying down on the ground, or of walking

some paces in front of the earthen wall of the battery to which its other extremity was rivetted. In these various changes of position he had passed the hours between midnight and dawn—hours, which to Beatrice had seemed interminable, but to him like the flight of thought, for he felt that the first streak of morning would bring to him the darkness of the grave.

His gaze, intently fixed on the eastern horizon, at length distinguished a pale tinge of grey stealing on its verge, and imperceptibly dissolving as it were the thick gloom into liquid light. He was lying down as this signal of fate broke on him, and the chill of the earth seemed to curdle through his frame as he gazed.

“To the guns!” cried the officer in command of the battery close behind; an instant’s bustle told that the cannoneers sprang to their respective posts. Gaspar bounded from the earth, and in the convulsive instinct of alarm at the coming contest, he threw himself back against the battery’s mound, as though its support were in some

sort a shelter. He grasped his chain, link by link, in either hand, gathered up the coils, and held them as a buckler of defence before his breast, every link rattling as he shook in a paroxysm of fear. That first fit over, alternate flushings and chills passed across him, and a rigid tension of nerve and muscle succeeded their apparent state of dislocation.

Minute followed minute, as Gaspar stood awaiting in terrible suspense the opening discharge of the artillery. He at times turned up his eyes to the line of grisly tubes projecting from the embrasures of the battery behind him, and watched for the simultaneous flashes from their twenty iron mouths. Then his quick glance shot across the river, and sought to distinguish the castle. Scarcely had he observed the shadowy indistinctness of towers and bastions, thrown out in black relief from the streaked brightness of the sky beyond, when a well-known word or two of command in the battery was followed by the instant application of each burning fuse, and the whole

line of ordnance sent forth a salvo against the castle walls: the crash was stunning, and the shock threw forward the Moriscoe from the mound he leaned against. The river in front of the battery trembled in the concussion, and the intervening ground seemed for a moment to undulate like it. The rocks beyond echoed back the roar, and the grey cloud of smoke floating towards the stream was attracted to its surface and sailed along, like a mantle covering its quiet, yet rapid course.

This opening burst from the main battery was the signal of general movement in the lines. The others, erected at intervals along the river's edge, now poured their angry assaults against the once more hostile village. And soon another and another discharge proclaimed the fierce energy with which 'Trovaldo's efforts were to be conducted against the particular part of the castle which he hoped to batter in breach. Gaspar, the while, trembled in every joint—for the first time in his long experience of the inspiring sound of cannon.

Enveloped in smoke, and deafened by the incessant roar, he could see nothing but the sulphureous flashes above his head ; and he thus stood in an agony of dread that each instant would bring some fatal bullet from the castle's answering guns, to consummate his fate ; but he was doomed to a more lingering expiation of his intended crime, for De Bassenveldt, resolved to spare to the utmost his store of ammunition, had forbidden his cannoneers to return, as usual, the besieging salvos, until the dawn was sufficiently clear for every shot to see its mark and *tell*.

At the first sounds of the firing, Trovaldo, invigorated by two or three hours' sleep, and freed from his previous oppression, came forward, with a strong, bold, step towards the northern battery, followed by his staff, and quickly joined by Lyderic, whom he had summoned by an aide-de-camp "to witness the execution of the renegade slave." Lyderic walked beside the general, silent and sullen, but inwardly rejoicing at the fate of him who had revealed his treachery to Ivon, had

failed to rid him of his rivalry, and was the brother of her who scorned him.

As soon as Trovaldo found that the castle guns were silent, he ordered his own to cease firing, that he might mark the Moriscoe in his agony ; and he commanded them to return none of the discharges from the castle till the victim fell, lest the smoke should obstruct his view of the catastrophe which he had come to gloat on. The salvos consequently ceased, and as the shroud of smoke rolled away, the Moriscoe, astonished that he still lived, had a full view of his abhorred and awe-inspiring master, with his myrmidons grouped at a short distance in cruel observance of him. A rush of pride, shame, and natural courage swelled in the Moriscoe's breast ; the overpowering horror of his first sensations having subsided, gave these better feelings time to rise. Gaspar remembered that he was a man, a soldier—had been, for a space, a freeman, and he now wound up his nerves to die as a hero might. Advancing to the

full length of his chain, with as haughty a movement as its cumbrous weight allowed, and throwing a stare of scorn and hatred at the lookers on, he folded his arms, and stood with a full front facing the castle, braving the iron shower of death which his heart now throbbed for. His cheeks were deadly pale, his lips compressed, his eye fixed ; every nerve, every feeling was on the utmost stretch, but he flinched not—though an electric thrill ran through him, when at length a flash broke from the castle rampart, and a quick following report told that the bullet was cutting its way through the air. It struck the parapet of the battery ; and several succeeding shots furrowed up the earth close around the Moriscoe, or passed in appalling proximity to him, and lodged in the earthen wall behind.

Trovaldo gazed with straining eyes. An occasional movement of compassion struggled with his fierce enjoyment. Had Gaspar but winced, he might, perhaps, have snatched him from the open jaws of destruction—but his unflinching

bearing irritated and inflamed his cruel master, the worst feelings of whose nature crushed every rising effort of remorse. Lyderic and the other officers watched the spectacle in silence, and many of them in indifference. The cannoneers of the silent battery, maddened at being forced to bear without returning the fire that had already dismounted two of their guns, and slain double that number of the men, stood ardently out from the embrasures, or leant across the parapet, watching for the fall of the Moriscoe, which was to be the signal of their renewed discharges.

And at length the moment came; the fire from the castle, as if in surprise at the silence of the battery, had slacked and ceased for a few seconds. Then one solitary gun sent out its thunder; the Moriscoe, almost simultaneously with the sound, sprang with a mechanical jerk from the earth, and instantly fell.

A savage shout told the glee of the impatient cannoneers—their matches were at once on the touch-holes—a renewed crash burst from the can-

nons' throats—and a vollied mass of smoke again covered the scene. But ere the men could reload their guns, a trumpet blast from the general's side ordered another pause ; and, careless of the danger, he came forward, irresistibly impelled to examine the remains of his victim. But what was his astonishment, and that of his followers, as the smoke rolled away, to see the supposed dead man rushing to the water's edge, and trailing his long chain after him, with arms outspread, as if he would have made them wings of escape, and in a moment more a plunge into the river told that he sought another element for safety. Trovaldo stood for a moment transfixed.

“ Fire at him ! Arquebusiers, fire ! ” said Lyderic, never losing his presence of mind when cruelty required it.

“ Hold ! ” exclaimed Trovaldo. “ Not a shot, at your life's peril ! It is a miracle—praise be to the Saints ! *Hagase el Milagro, y hagalo Mahoma !* ”*

* “ Let the miracle be done, though done by Mahomet,” is an old Spanish proverb.

“ A miracle ! a miracle ! ” shouted the soldiers, ready alike for slaughter or superstition. Each arquebuss was in an instant laid down ; every knee sought the earth ; and the whole of the awe-struck beholders watched with anxious eyes the unmolested Moriscoe, who, despite the encumbrance of his heavy chain, swam to the opposite bank in safety.

The marvellous escape of this man was caused by a simple and not unique instance of good luck. The bullet that seemed to have killed him, only broke the chain by which he was bound.* Its sudden snapping caused him to spring up and fall ; the prompt instinct of self-preservation told him to rush at once to the river ; and it is such escapes as these that give to some men the reputation of a charmed life, and add strength to the worst dogma of the Moriscoe’s own belief, which would rob *man* of the hope of God’s providence, and *God* of the glory of that great attribute.

* A similar occurrence happened to a Turkish slave, on board a Spanish vessel, in a sea-fight about that time.

But who, or what, might essay to shake the Moriscoe's confidence in destiny, when on reaching the castle, and being once more clasped in his sister's embrace, he learned that it was she who, in half frantic dread of his detention and death, had seized a match, invoked the demons of vengeance, and fired at the hated foe the very gun whose bullet had severed his chain !

The interest of this adventure was quickly superseded by fast-recurring events of individual and general excitement. Aben Farez, once more at liberty, turned his thoughts to some new enterprise to wipe away the stain of his last failure ; and Count Ivon, rejoicing at once in that failure and in his escape, gave him solemn injunctions against any further treacherous attempt on the person of Trovaldo, or even of Lyderic, whose existence was still more baneful to him. The atrocity of assassination was too frequently perpetrated in those wars, but in all instances by the Spaniards against the patriots. The Moriscoe, as has been seen, was bred in that school ;

and Trovaldo was nothing loath to practise against his opponents the same means of riddance so often attempted, and too often successfully. In the fatal instance of William, the father of Maurice, the great founder of his country's freedom and the prolific stem of his family's glory, suspicion exists, almost as strong as proof, that the Duke of Parma, himself a very hero in the field, connived at the murderer's plan, and followed up the villainy of the odious Philip, who excited it. But retaliation in kind, the *lex talionis*, was never practised by the patriots; and their long and bloody struggle is unsullied by that stain.

CHAPTER VIII.

A MORE manly occasion for the exercise of the Moriscoe's courage almost immediately occurred. During the heat of the combat the preceding evening, when the castle troops had penetrated into the village, forcing back the royalists in all directions, a small party of twenty men, headed by a captain, were impetuously hurried on to the river's edge, and thence carried by a body of the flying enemy into one of the large boats by which they were effecting their escape across to the camp. They were thus made prisoners

in the very moment of victory, by those they had themselves defeated. De Bassenveldt, who saw the transaction, as he fought his way in the enemy's entrenchments, wrote a letter the next morning to the unlucky captain, upbraiding him for having suffered himself and his twenty men to be so trepanned, even by double the number of the beaten foe. This letter was sent soon after the Moriscoe's escape to the castle, accompanied by a flag of truce, with a protest on the part of Count Ivon, addressed to Trovaldo, against any complicity on his part in the attempt on his life; and a proposal for a few hours' truce for the purpose of burying the dead.

Trovaldo, whose fury at the Moriscoe's escape had had time to recover its violence as his servile superstition subsided, received the bearer of De Bassenveldt's white flag with insult, and almost with outrage. But Lyderic, who foresaw reprisals, on the part of Prince Maurice and the Dutch troops, for any excess on the side of the Spaniards, repressed the general's wrath, as anxiously as he

would have encouraged it were its consequences to fall on him alone ; while Don Juan listened to his advice, and followed it, from the force of the habit he had acquired of receiving Lyderic's suggestions in spite of his jealousy towards him.

“ Well, then, I will calmly read this rebel's communication ; though, by the mass, a feather's weight would turn the balance, and make me hang up his messenger like a dog.”

A fierce look accompanied these words, as he tore away the envelope of Count Ivon's letter ; but the officer who bore it, thus menaced, leaned on his long rapier, with an air of swaggering indifference ; and seemed either not to hear or not to heed what so seriously concerned him ; nor did he shew the slightest change, while Trovaldo broke out in the following strain, still in imperfect Walloon French :—

“ Without his knowledge ! Let him then give up the assassin ! Will he do that ? Will he send back my slave, bound hand and foot, to pay his treason with his forfeit life ? Will he himself,

arch-rebel as he is, yield his strong hold, and lay his outlawed head at his sovereign's feet? A truce to bury the dead! Let them rot under his nostrils first, and breed a plague for him and his base crew! Will he do all this? Is he ready at my summons? Do you hear me, Sirrah? It is to you I speak."

"Indeed!" said the officer, with imperturbable coolness, and in the same mixed dialect with his savage interlocutor. "I really thought you were speaking to yourself, or some other of your staff."

"Fellow! dog! durst you—"

"Oh! if that is the way you talk, Don Juan, I don't understand a word you're saying."

"Insolent villain!" exclaimed Trovaldo, almost choking with rage.

"Tut, tut—it's very plain you can't mean me, Don Juan; so you had better turn your conversation to some one else. I don't hear you."

"Audacious ribald! By the fires of purgatory, you shall hang!" exclaimed the general, with less violence and more dignity.

“ By the flames of a hotter place than that, I shall *not*,” replied the officer, with perfect composure.

“ He blasphemes !” cried several voices. “ A rope, a rope ! Hang him up ! Cut him down !” were vociferated by the group of armed men who surrounded Trovaldo ; but his wrath decreased in proportion as they warmed, like all fiery substances which impart their caloric and grow cool. Swords were instantly drawn, and lances levelled ; and the cumbrous locks of more than one arquebuss gave notice that their bearers were making them ready ; while others ran in various directions, repeating the call for a rope. The officer saw that the moment was critical, and having gained his point of calming the general’s rage, he lost no time in turning the new torrent he had provoked. Whatever he might have felt, he looked at least unruffled, and pointing to the white flag which he held in one hand, he said, in a loud and firm tone,

“ Don Juan de Trovaldo, officers and men, I

warn you to beware, all of ye ! You talk of hanging up and cutting down, but mark my words ! If one drop of my blood stains this flag, or if one coil of a rope is cast round this neck, the provost of Flanders, and every Spanish prisoner in yonder castle, will swing from the rampart wall in an hour after. So hang me, or shoot me, and that will be my consolation. But moreover, I am an officer in the service of the States General of Holland. Here is my commission. So hack me to pieces, or pike me, whichever you like best ; and I promise you, gentlemen all, that Prince Maurice will do the same for every man, woman, and child of ye, one day or another. And more than that, I am a subject of her majesty the Queen of England, God bless her, though it's little good she ever did for me or mine ! Here is my letter of license, as a free and independent adventurer, to sell my sword and my services, my life, and all other appurtenances, barring my allegiance, by land and by water, to any state, king or people, all over the world, ay, or under it, down to the very

Antipodes themselves, signed with her own royal seal, and a great long ELIZABETH, in letters the length of my rapier—and I take leave to tell you, that if you lay a little finger on me, except in the way of fair fighting, or shaking hands at parting, that your very king on his throne won't be safe from my royal mistress's vengeance, not even if another invincible armada was to be conquered in the quarrel. And also, it is myself, Lieutenant Thaddeus Gallagher, that tells you this—of a family older than your countryman Milesius, whose ancestors came from Scythia the year before the flood, when King Connal and his seven sons—”

“Cease, babbler!” cried Trovaldo, “I have listened to you too long. If, however, there is one word of truth in your tirade, and that one proves you a subject of the Queen of England, my gracious master's royal ally, you are safe. Stand back all! Baron Roulemonde, examine his papers—see to the license he speaks of.”

“I think,” resumed Gallagher, sternly, “that Baron de Roulemonde can vouch for me, without

looking at the licence, if indeed the memory that forgets gratitude and friendship, and some other small trifles, is not too weak to keep hold of such a great one as the name and nation of a poor subaltern like myself.”

Lyderic examined the papers, apparently unheeding Gallagher’s blundering sarcasm, which was, however, clearly understood, and keenly relished by Trovaldo, as was evinced by his hoarse laugh, and his immediate orders that Gallagher should be suffered to depart the camp unmolested.

“ But my answer, Don Juan ? Will you grant the truce, for sake of the feelings of humanity and of your own dead soldiers ; to say nothing of decency, and the poor souls with not a handful of earth over them ? ”

“ A mass shall be said for their souls ere noon. Let the bodies lie untouched by rebellion’s unconsecrated hands—quick from without our lines, good fellow !—You have your answer.”

“ Now, then, Don Juan, take mine. I am no rebel—I am a gentleman adventurer, whose sword

is without stain ; and I swear by St. Patrick, as good an oath as ever slipped from lips, that this sword shall dig the graves of the brave fellows it killed last night—and a very pretty little heap there is of them. I put them to death without malice, and they shall not be left to taint the air with reproaches against me—these arms will give them honourable burial within this very hour, though every battery in your line was let loose upon me the while ! That is my vow ! I'll keep it, so help me Heaven ! Do for the rest as you like !”

Uncovering his head, and solemnly kissing the cross of his rapier's hilt, the Catholic soldier's common pledge in those days, Gallagher then bowed courteously to those who were so lately on the point of immolating him, and turned away towards the river, accompanied by his trumpeters, and an escort to lead them through the lines. Trovaldo and the rest, including even Lyderic, were struck silent by the air of chivalric piety by which the brave Irishman seemed inspired. They gazed after him as he walked away ; but he had

not gone a hundred yards when he suddenly turned round again, and pulling a paper and a purse from his pocket, he advanced towards Trovaldo, and said,

“ Don Juan, with your permission, I forgot one half of my errand. I confide to your care this letter, and a supply of cash for my comrade Captain M‘Intyre, who had the misfortune to be made prisoner by the very soldiers who were running away from him and his brave fellows.”

“ Sir,” replied Trovaldo, haughtily, “ it is well for this Scottish captain that he is, like yourself, the subject of the Queen of England. The money shall go safe to him—the letter I must read. Ha ! what have we here ? insult and injury lurking in every word or deed of this bold brigand ! Cavaliers all, listen to this—it is thus the rebel writes to yon captive Scot :

“ ‘ The loss of a brave soldier like you is great, but the dishonour of your capture, with twenty of our gallant fellows, is greater. Double the num-

ber of the dastard foe should never have gained such a triumph. A score of freemen ought to match a hundred myrmidons of tyranny. I send you money, and hope soon to ransom you at the sword's point.

“‘IVON DE BASSEVELDT.’

“Now, gentlemen, what say ye? Is this to be borne? Can Castilian blood run coolly in your veins while ye listen to language like this? Is no loyal Fleming ready to revenge himself on the traitor?”

“I am ready—I, who arrested the factious burgomaster in their highness' palace, and would now tear the outlaw from his fastness; I challenge any two of his troop to meet me and prove this,” exclaimed a rough Fleming, of gigantic stature, advancing in front of the group of officers.

“Bravo, Lekkerbeetje!” cried Trovaldo; and immediately almost every one of those warriors, with the exception of Lyderic, stood fiercely out, throwing looks of defiance at Gallagher,

shaking their clenched fists towards the castle, or marking their indignation by various other gestures.

“Steady, steady, my friends!” cried Trovaldo, raising his hand; “a matter like this must be solemnly done. You are here full a score—nor can one man satisfy all. But mark me, my bold Irishman, for I must acknowledge your gallant bearing, I speak for my friends around me, and I send back by you, into De Bassenveldt’s teeth, their defiance of him and his whole garrison. This fine fellow here, Gerard Abramzoon, or as he is familiarly called among us, Lekkerbeetje, their highness the archdukes’ chamberlain, was the first to throw down his gauntlet in this quarrel. He and twenty more, now present, challenge to mortal fight as many of the rebel garrison—to meet, an hour before sunset, in the meadows yonder on the river’s eastern bank, under the safe guarantee of honourable warfare, with armour and *armes blanches*, rapier and poignard, to fight this quarrel out, *à l’outrance*, and without quarter. Should

my brave comrades conquer, as honour to the saints, they will, I trust! a helm and spear to be laid a tribute by your chieftain at the survivor's feet—should fate decide for you, the captive Scot and his fellow prisoners to be liberated on the spot, without fee or ransom. To these conditions I pledge a soldier's faith, Juan De Trovaldo, Knight of the Golden Fleece, so help me, Heaven! Lekkerbeetje, and my brave friends all, throw down each man his gage!"

On the word, one-and-twenty gloves were flung on the earth at Gallagher's feet. He looked at them for a few moments as if counting them, and then turning to Trovaldo, he said, in a tone of unusual animation,

"Don Juan, this looks well. This is something like fair fighting, and it does me good to see it. This is better than pumping up the Meuse, to wash out our vaults, and drown the rats. Oh, St. Patrick! if the whole war was to be settled by this fight, how easy the sons of freedom might sleep in their beds to-night. Yes, I've counted them—twenty-

one—all right, and I promise you a speedy answer to your challenge. But I must make one or two remarks. In the first place, I refuse, on behalf of my brother soldiers, Mynheer Cracklejaw's first defiance, for no two gentlemen of De Bassenveldt's chasseurs could condescend to meet even a giant in single combat. But I think I know one, and that is Lieutenant Gallagher, who will measure swords before sunset with this Goliath of yours. And it would give me the greatest of pleasures if Baron de Roulemonde there would break a lance or a head with me on the same occasion. But *we* shall be there, depend on my word; but on this one condition, that in the previous arrangements for the fight, the word *rebel* is heard no more. It would be neither becoming to us to brook it, nor to honourable gentlemen like these to cope in the lists with traitors. It is an ugly word, Don Juan, and the winning of a battle might change a rebel into a hero, you know—so consent for this day to give up the foul stigma, and here I throw down my gage."

“ For this day then and in honour of this combat, I cancel the objectionable term,” said Trovaldo.

“ Then, Bassenveldt a-boo, agus Erin go Bragh ! Whoop !” exclaimed Gallagher, forcibly dashing his glove on the ground, and at the same time jumping in the air, and slapping his ungloved hand against his thigh, with a vivacity strongly contrasted to the Spaniards’ fierce gravity, and the heavy anger of the Flemings who made up the list of challengers. Gallagher was soon clear of the lines and returned from his mission ; and between castle and camp the active stir of preparation and arrangement for combat was soon reciprocally heard and seen. Long before the appointed time, the rude and hastily constructed lists were arranged. The truce which Trovaldo had so peremptorily refused for the burial of the dead, was freely conceded, to add new subjects for the grave. A total cessation of firing on either side was the silent evidence of temporary repose, and but for the rapid inter-

ments, to complete which advantage of the truce was taken by Gallagher and the men under his orders, the whole warlike scene at either side of the river might be supposed the mere pageantry of peace. The tilting-place in the appointed meadows was, however, far different in appearance from the lists of the then unfrequent tournaments, and the absence of the pomp and circumstance of those mock-heroine combats foretold the desperate reality of that which was about to take place. The sullen good-faith preserved by the workmen and soldiers, who fixed up and guarded the various barriers and standards marking the limits of the fight, spoke the dark enmity of their suppressed feelings. And all their duties went on in gloomy anxiety for the hour that was again to let loose their fierce passions, and see them quenched in blood.

The sun already sloped towards the verge of the forest, and the misty radii which dart visibly from him as he sets, were evident in the western sky, when simultaneous trumpet blasts from camp

and castle, spoke the departure of the respective champions for the fatal rendezvous. Rafts and boats were soon seen to cross the river, filled with horses and armed men, each cavalier standing by the head of his good steed, his plumed helm and glittering armour in brilliant keeping with its rich caparisons. As soon as the boats reached the eastern bank, both men and coursers were landed, and an active vault into the saddle instantly joined them, apparent parts of the same gallant animal (as their similitudes had appeared to the astonished Peruvians), a union to be only severed by the death struggles of each. As the troop, with vizors down and lances in rest, slowly advanced in double files from the water's edge to the lists, preceded by their trumpets and their herald in his glittering tabard, loud shouts of applause and encouragement rang along the Spanish lines, almost the entire besieging army having poured forth to witness the scene. Close following, came the prisoners, the Scotch captain, and his twenty comrades, on foot without arms or har-

ness, bare-headed, and escorted by a due number of men at arms. Next were the umpires for the royalist side, officers of high rank, with their pages, varlets, and a guard of honour, suitable to the important office they now filled ; the whole cortège forming a gallant and imposing display.

Deeply contrasting with it, was now observed the garrison quota of combatants, umpires, and attendants in correspondent numbers—man for man, steed for steed, weapon for weapon—as they issued from the outer portal of the castle defences, and wound their way in solemn pace down the steep path that led circuitously to the meadows. Instead of a gaudy array of harness and housings, the castle champions showed no colours save black, in the armour of the men or the furniture of their steeds. The whole troop looked a moving mass of mourning, enough to strike gloom into opponents less resolved than theirs ; and the silence of their advance, for no shouts came from the castle walls, made it evident that they wanted no factitious aid to inflame them

in the fight. Yet for two, at least, of this determined band, excitements were visible, such as might rouse the mildest temperament to a level with the boldest.

For standing out in a balcony projecting from a small minaret-like turret that communicated by a winding stair with the picture gallery and the Wizard's Tower, were two figures, in anxious observance of the warrior procession, and following it with keen glances, from the moment it left the court-yard and defiled through the portal, of which the balcony commanded a view, that was extended beyond the walls and down to the very meadows where the fight was to take place. These observers were Beatrice and Theresa, the first watching her brother's figure among the cavaliers, with an intenseness of affection somewhat blended with envy that she could not partake his honorable perils—the other gazing, with a throbbing heart and pallid cheek, after one whom she had too clearly recognized to be him of whom, for so many weary days, she had no direct tidings, he

whom she now knew more than ever to be entwined with every feeling of her heart.

Beatrice had not failed to make an immediate report to Theresa of the Moriscoe's almost miraculous escape, and also the result of Gallagher's mission, the challenge for the fight, and its instant acceptance by nineteen more of the castle inmates, who all, under Count Ivon's ready sanction, volunteered in a band to meet the defiance, with Gallagher as their leader. The twentieth place on the list could have been filled from a hundred candidates; but De Bassenveldt when he made the challenge public, and asked for volunteers, not only restricted his few officers from being of the number, with the sole exception of Gallagher, but also when Aben Farez and eighteen of his brave chasseurs stepped forward, he stopped short all other aspirants, declaring that one place must be reserved for a person, for the mention of whose name he claimed exemption, but for whose honour he pledged himself responsible. The wish of the chieftain was a law—his

voice an oracle, and the champions without further question commenced their preparations. De Bassenveldt appointed Don Diego Leonis and the senior captain of his regiment to be umpires in the fight, the Saxon major, formerly mentioned, having been, with some other officers, killed during the operations of the siege. At the appointed time Gallagher found himself at the place of muster, and counted his full complement of twenty cavaliers, none to be distinguished from their fellows in the uniform suits of black mail, their closed visors, and the solemn silence in which they mustered and sallied forth.

These preliminary arrangements were communicated by Beatrice to her friend; and also an intimation not quite obscure, that the twentieth place on this chivalric muster-roll would be filled by him who engrossed Theresa's thoughts, and who had sworn, by some deed of desperate gallantry, to merit her heart and hand. Luckily for our heroine this intimation was so closely followed by the rapid action of events, that suspense did not inter-

vene to convert excitement into suffering. Following the guidance of Beatrice, she reached the balcony before mentioned; and thence she plainly saw the movements of the departing warriors, who seemed to her as though marching to almost avoidless doom. One by one she marked them file away under the balcony and out at the portal, and as each successive cavalier for awhile disappeared, her heart sunk lower and lower—for no sign of recognition, no movement of hand or head gave token of *his* gratitude, or cheered her anxiety. At every moment she grasped Beatrice's arm with a closer pressure; and as the latest files came directly past, her eyes closed, as though sensation could no longer endure the struggle.

“Ah, my brother!” exclaimed Beatrice; and Theresa, starting into animation at the sound, observed the last but one of the departing horsemen, with his gauntleted hands raised to his helmet, in the gesture of Moslem salutation. He recovered his bridle, grasped his lance more firmly, and passed on.

“ And there !” continued Beatrice, pointing down ; but a nervous scream of joy, or terror—it might be either, or both—burst from Theresa, and broke her companion’s sentence.

“ It is he—it is, it is !” cried she ; and a rush of tears dimmed the object of this passionate exclamation. She dashed her tears rapidly away, and leaned forward, with open hands and straining eyes, as the last horseman reined up his steed, raised his visor, and directed a beaming look of confidence and love to meet her eloquent glance.

“ Oh, Lambert, Lambert !” cried she, “ whither dost thou go ? Why must *thou* rush on this desperate enterprise ? Oh, stay, stay !—this rash trial is not wanting to make me thine !”

The only reply to this apostrophe was a look directed onwards towards the advancing troop, and a gesture of impatient appeal to her who would dissuade him from following in its track. She felt its full force—she blushed at her dishonouring exclamation—and answered by the forward motion of her extended arms in the direction of

the battle-field. Another speaking glance, and his hand pressed on his heart, were the lover's replies to her inspiring gesture. And while she shrank back, affrighted at the sentence of fierce peril she had pronounced, he drove his spurs into the courser's flanks, and bounded forth to overtake his comrades on their course of victory or death.

Theresa and her bolder, but not less sensitive companion, must be now left to the reader's fancy, while we hurry on to the field with this band of chivalry.

The umpires, supported by their guards, were soon in their respective stations, at each side of the lists, near enough to mark the events of the fight, and watch over its details. The group of prisoners stood aloof on an elevated space, scantily guarded for form's sake, but restrained by their sense of honour from any attempt at evasion, which the forthcoming bustle might favour. The royalist champions, chiefly Spaniards, but mixed with four or five Flemings, and an Italian or two, were now drawn up in line, headed by their colos-

sal chief, Geras' Abramzoon. The garrison band soon took their position, a hundred yards in front of the enemy, Gallagher as their leader standing out a little space before. Scarcely were the spears, by common signal, set firm, the tightened reins grasped close, and every cavalier wound up in rigid valour, when a loud blast from the trumpets proclaimed the charge; and every spur was struck deep, every bounding hoof dashed into the earth, and in one rapid rush the combatants met together in deadly shock. A few riders were unhorsed, and some horses overthrown. Several of either party passed through the opposite lines as their opponents fell or were driven aside.

They then wheeled round to renew the charge, and by these means each side changed its original position. In this manœuvre the large Flanders steeds were hard of management, being, in the words of Blundeville, a writer of that time, "more meete for the shooke than to passe a *curvette* or *carrière*, because they be verie grosse and heavie," and the few royalist riders who were mounted on

light Spanish jennets now found ~~the~~ advantage. But the lines soon formed again, and another charge took place, the trumpets still sounding an alarum. Then the shivered spears were cast from every hand, and rapiers were quickly drawn and dashing on mail and helm; and the combat immediately became one of detached groups or individual contest. Each man singled out his opponent, and in their desperate struggles many came to the ground, where, when swords were broken, or the combatants flung together to the earth, the poignard's point completed what the longer weapons had begun. Several on either side were thus soon despatched, the condition which precluded quarter being too faithfully observed. Those who survived the first onslaught, panting, and almost breathless from its fury, fought in their own despite with decreasing vigour. Pauses were made, vantage looked out, and positions taken which changed the impetuous complexion of the affair into one of cold-blooded slaughter. And the fiercest observer could scarcely fail to sicken at the exhausted

efforts of brave men, to strangle or cut the throats of gallant enemies, and stifle their own wishes to shew them mercy. Several of the wounded horses, freed from their riders, now plunged furiously round the plain, galloped over the prostrate champions, and often finished the work of death, by random strokes of their heavy-shod hoofs. The umpires and guards meanwhile looked on with an air as unruffled as they could command; and the group of prisoners stood, in anxiety which needs no description, inglorious spectators of a struggle on which depended their freedom or captivity, or as it might eventually be, their lives.

In the early mêlée it was almost impossible to recognise individuals, from the similarity of armour and accoutrements. One alone was clearly distinguishable all through by his gigantic stature. This was *Lekkerbeetje*, who, on the opening shock had overthrown Gallagher; and as the fight went on, he was seen, even when his horse, pierced with wounds, had sunk under his immense weight, to maintain his ground against several successive

opponents, striding from place to place, and frequently, by a blow of his ponderous weapon, deciding the struggle equally maintained between one of his own party and one of De Bassenveldt's.

But one pair of straining eyes that watched the fight had never for an instant lost sight of another combatant ; nor will my readers require to be told that they were Theresa's, thus fixed as by talismanic influence on the person of her lover. Astonishment was at times mixed with her fears, at seeing, in the first instance, his bold and skilful management of the heavy war steed, and, when he was unhorsed in the *mêlée*, the impetuous activity with which he played his part in the deadly drama enacted before her. She did not know of what a true lover is capable, in the inspiring presence of her he loves ; nor was she aware of the promptness with which a clever head and a bold heart accommodate themselves to new situations, even should they be incongruous to all former habits. A sense of proud delight at times rushed through Theresa's mind, on witnessing her lover's prowess, over-

coming for awhile her alarm for his safety. A glow of satisfaction that he thus redeemed his pledge—a confident hope in his escape and triumph—admiration at Count Ivon's magnanimity, in affording his rival this opportunity of emulating his own valour—again, a suspicion that he so favoured Lambert Boonen's wishes only to involve his life; and a chill of terror at his imminent danger, thus again brought back to her heart. Such were the varied thoughts that darted athwart her mind; but her eyes never wandered from her lover's form; and during the rapid shiftings of the scene, it never for one instant escaped her view.

Within half an hour from the commencement of the fight, full half those who began it were corpses on the plain, or lay gasping in the agonies of death. The survivors, most of them wounded, and all exhausted to the utmost, went on as best they might with their barbarous and bloody work. Here and there a couple were seen lying side by side, grappling at each other's throat, tearing handfulls of hair from their opponent's head, or faintly stab-

bing with their poignards at the most defenceless part of their form. In other places, two friends stood back to back, and resisted the attacks of their assailants. By slow and sad degrees the garrison champions had every one fallen, except the apprentice and the Moriscoe, the two against whom, at starting, (from their light forms and less apparent strength) the chances seemed the greatest. Opposed to them, (as they stood back to back together in the way described, but not exactly touching, for Gallagher's still breathing though insensible body lay between them) were *Lekkerbeetje* and four of his powerful companions, still unhurt amidst the desperate conflict. The exultation of the royalists, the despondency of the patriots, and the despair of the prisoners were all at the highest pitch.

Lekkerbeetje and his four supporters, resolved to make quick work of their two remaining opponents, now pressed on, and dealt their blows and thrusts with a violence which for awhile proved the safety of their intended victims; for their long

rapiers, clashing and crossing all together, failed to reach the destined mark ; and the brisk movements of the apprentice and the Moriscoe ensured to their assailants several wounds. One of the royalists fell ; but they still found themselves so pressed by the four remaining sword-blades, that they found their only chance of safety was in breaking away and changing their tactics altogether, in imitation of the celebrated brothers of antiquity in a contest like their own.

Starting off, therefore, at a mutual signal, they apparently fled for several yards, in different directions. Loud shouts burst from the royalist spectators. Don Diego Leonis and the rest of the garrison party were overwhelmed with shame and grief. We cannot attempt to describe the sensations of Theresa. But Beatrice quailed not.

“ Fear nothing now, my friend,” cried she—
“ the victory must be ours. It is now skill and presence of mind, against brute force.”

This confident exclamation gave little relief to Theresa, although she breathed freer when she

saw her lover and the Moriscoe, almost at the same instant, stop and turn on their pursuers, who had, like them, divided, and followed in couples, and were now, consequently, two to one in their separate assaults. At the very instant the apprentice made a sudden stop, and turning round he plunged his sword into the body of the pursuer next to him. The man fell to the earth, and ere the weapon was extricated the other was close upon him. A desperate, but now an equal, contest began once more; and the patriots and the prisoners, in their turn, sent out a loud shout of applause. The fate of the Moriscoe, however, quickly changed the current of these fluctuating tones, for *Lekkerbeetje* and the comrade who had singled him as their prey, bore him down to the earth. The giant commander threw himself upon him, and holding him with one hand, leaned over him, supported on the other, recovering his breath previous to completing the butchery, at the same time motioning to his comrade to fly to the aid of the apprentice's opponent. This tacit order was

in a moment or two obeyed. But the apprentice, on his approach, again trusting to his activity of limb, turned away and ran. The two royalists again pursued, but he far outstripped them, and by a quick and well-timed change of direction, ere they could turn their headlong course, he dashed strait to the spot where *Lekkerbeetje*, having drawn forth his dagger and bared the Moriscoe's throat, was on the very point of consummating his fate. The apprentice strained every nerve, in hopes to reach him unobserved, and to arrest his arm by the blow of death. But the hoarse shouts of his still running companions warned the giant of his danger. Casting a look on his coming assailant, now within ten yards of him, he changed his dagger into his left hand, grasped with his right the rapier that lay on the earth beside him, and rose up in appalling height. But before he could quite wield his weapons the apprentice darted in under his imperfect guard, and by a stroke across his unhelmed front, he knocked him backwards, when coming against the

Moriscoe's body, as the latter was springing again to his feet, he fairly fell to the earth, and ere he reached it a home sent thrust from the apprentice's rapier gave him his mortal wound.

At sight of this catastrophe, and of the Moriscoe and the apprentice both again turned gallantly towards them, and stunned by the vociferated applause from the patriots, the two unfortunate royalists lost all presence of mind, all courage, and all sense of shame ; and throwing aside their weapons, they dropped on their knees, and cried aloud for mercy. The Moriscoe, like an unsated tiger, rushed on one of them, and was on the point of smiting him, when his arm was forcibly arrested by the apprentice's grasp, and thus the miserable remnants of the royalist party were snatched from their comrades' fate.

Fourteen of that party lay dead, including their commander. Six were desperately, if not all fatally maimed. Nine or ten of the patriot champions were slain, and all the others wounded more or less. The Moriscoe bled from a cut on

the cheek which his helmet had prevented being mortal. The apprentice was slightly hurt in one shoulder by a rapier's point, and a side blow from another had glanced down his thigh.

When the issue of the fight was complete, the umpires, sustaining their dignified parts, and suppressing at each side their various feelings, declared, in a short announcement by their respective heralds, the result, broke up the lists, and pronounced the Scottish captain and his twenty comrades to be free.

The royalist troop, with muttered curses and dark scowls, slowly repaired to the river's side, where boats awaited them, carrying off their dead and wounded. The garrison band, with boisterous gratulations, surrounded the victors. The last glimpse which Theresa's streaming eyes caught of her lover's form, beheld him in the act of taking off the helmet which he had borne all through the combat. The surrounding crowd then hid him from her view; but she heard another long protracted shout, or rather yell, burst

from the group, in which all the elements of rapture and triumph seemed combined.

The rejoicing cavalcade soon came on towards the castle. The wounded were carefully carried on hand-litters—the dead remained on the field to be placed in a ready grave. Theresa and Beatrice, clasped in each other's arms, watched speechlessly the approaching group. Beatrice bore the sight of triumph well, and grew calmer as the shouts of victory came closer. But when Theresa again caught her lover's upturned gaze of impassioned tenderness, and saw him borne along, with acclamations from the whole garrison that almost stifled the loud salute of the trumpets and the artillery, the rush of joy and gratitude to Heaven was too much for her: she sunk back in a swoon of ecstasy.

The sun was just down at this consummation of the desperate and barbarous scene. But its final close was in still more savage keeping with the half civilized fierceness of the times. The two ill-fated royalists, who had shrunk from an ho-

nourable death, and even thrown away their fair chance of final victory, were instantly sacrificed to Trovaldo's infuriate resentment. Ere the sun's last rays ceased to gild the castle's topmost minaret, these hapless wretches swung, hanging from a gibbet erected close to the river's edge ; and the gazing army of the besiegers gloomily prepared for a morrow of desperate vengeance.

CHAPTER IX.

THERESA had not sunk into insensibility ; for though her eyes were closed she heard the confused buzz of acclamation, and felt the supporting arms of Beatrice, who drew her from the balcony into the castle. She was even conscious of the way by which Beatrice half carried, half led her along ; and could count every step of descent, trace every turn and winding of the various passages, and finally knew that she reposed on a bench in the picture gallery, close by the principal casement. She soon heard the indistinct murmurs of two voices, and felt the pressure

of more hands than one, touching successively the nerves of her wrist through which the throbbings of pulsation are easiest detected.

A crowd of strange emotions rushed upon her as she thus lay. With the acuteness acquired by one sense from the suppression of another, she was conscious, or believed herself so, of the identity of the fingers which pressed her hand or touched her arm. Fancy, almost as active as if she had been really under the influence of a vision, pictured the figure of Lambert Boonen tenderly hanging over her, and her ears eagerly strained to catch the tones of his voice. Her efforts to revive seemed to propel the blood from her heart, and she felt it tingle through her veins, swell in her lips, and colour her cheeks again. Her limbs began to move, her eyelids, too, trembled into life once more; and all these symptoms of recovered sensation were evident to the observers as quickly as they were felt by her, as was proved by her being suddenly left alone. When her eyes opened wide, and she sprang from

her recumbent posture, no faces, save the murky portraits, in their huge and dust-covered frames, met her piercing gaze.

Disappointed and confounded she looked again and again into every recess where it was possible a figure could be concealed. She was sure that her lover had been there a moment before; the warm pressure of his hand thrilled on her's. Or was it, could it be that of another? of another *lover*? Was Lambert Boonen already the victim of his own daring? Had De Bassenveldt in envy or jealousy dealt foully by him, and already usurped his place? These and a hundred other torturing cogitations sprang into life and died in their very birth.

The sun had by this time totally withdrawn, and the dim twilight scarcely penetrated the high and narrow casements. The greater part of the gallery was in shade, only relieved by the darker tints of the black oak wainscotting, or the heavy draperies of purple Ypres velvet, loaded with the dust of full half a century. The huge carved

picture-frames, encrusted with mould, and hanging forward from the walls, threw deeper shadows across the gallery, and the portraits dimly staring out seemed to grow into congenial life in this atmosphere of mystery and gloom. The common external noises were hushed ; the cannons had ceased their usual roar, and the distant murmurings within the castle harmonized with, without interrupting, the vague solemnity around.

Theresa was by no means one of those bold exceptions to the age in which she lived, who occasionally spurn the laws that bind human nature in a revolving coil of prejudice and superstition. She partook, as has been shewn, of the latter infirmity, in a lesser degree than might have been expected from her hereditary temperament and conventual education, but sufficiently to make her now shudder, in the conviction that she was in the chosen haunt of spirits of another world, and the close neighbourhood where the unhallowed practices of art had often forced their appearance in this. The creeping dread that

suddenly possessed her was speedily combatted by her natural strength of mind, which suggested the only remedy she was conscious of, against fears which it could not reject. She had promptly recourse to prayer, and repeated in pious trepidation several of the most approved conjurations of the existing ritual against ghosts and sorcery ; when in a returning paroxysm of fear she saw plainly the outline of a figure, which she could not minutely distinguish, but which at once struck her as the same that stood represented close to her, in the portrait of René the Wizard. She did not see the face, but the draped costume was precisely similar, and the wand which the painted resemblance held in its hand was now evidently shaken in that of the figure. It moved slowly towards the stairs leading to the tower, the door of which it softly opened, and then disappeared.

Theresa was for a moment or two stunned by this apparition. But her late train of feeling had strengthened, and, as she then felt, enlightened her mind. She had no doubt but that this was

a trick arranged by Beatrice and De Bassenveldt. A glow of resentment followed the thought. She instantly recovered her courage in the rush of contempt at the unworthy farcé; and with a hasty step, indicative of her resentment, she gained her own apartments, where she found Madame Marguerite and the chaplain discussing the merits of the combat which had just taken place.

The every-day topics of the siege were now, on all occasions, canvassed by Madame Marguerite, as freely as though they were of the most indifferent import. The noise of the cannon no longer frightened her. Remote from the sufferings of the garrison, she considered their conflicts but as the sports of gallant men; and in her own fancied security she had no anxiety for the perils of others. Her mind, so to call it, was purely matter of fact. Imagination was a dead letter with her; and consequently she had little or none of the finer sympathies of nature, almost all of which have their source in *it*. Lieutenant Gallagher's flattery was her supreme delight; and in his absence she had

infinite pleasure in the gossip of Father Jerome. She spoke at times of Lyderic de Roulemonde as a monster, and had apparently altogether forgotten the Marquess of Assembourg. Nothing, in short, went actually ill with her. But she was beginning to feel some qualms of dissatisfaction within the last few days, on learning the impossibility of being supplied with fresh butter or even milk, a serious privation to her who was so long accustomed to be served from the overflowing dairies of Flanders. When told that the cows were obliged to be killed, from want of provender, and to afford a scanty ration of meat to the garrison, she pitied the brutes and had a sort of blunted sympathy with the men, because their evils were associated with her own. But she consoled herself as well as she could with the spiced condiments, sweetmeats, and other delicacies which gave to her and Theresa's table a sufficient stock of equivalents for what was curtailed.

Her conversation with the chaplain now turned chiefly on the matter of the approaching supper,

but still mixed with the main subject of the day ; for Father Jerome had attended on several of the wounded and dying champions, and gleaned from their accounts a smattering of the events of the fight. Father Jerome was accustomed to these things. He shrived a man, and sent his soul on its immortal journey, as methodically as the bungling surgeon bandaged a cicatrix, or cut off a limb. For he cared little for common-place events, unless they might be in some way tinged with a dash of sorcery, the most dearly cherished of his superstitions. He was, on the present occasion, quite in his element ; for having, like so many others, witnessed the fight, he pronounced the conduct of the victors to be the undoubted effect of magic.

“ Besides which,” continued the chaplain, “ it cannot be denied that Count Ivon, my noble patron, notwithstanding his mockery on the subject of the black art, is deeply imbued with its mysteries. How, indeed, could he shake off the hereditary effects of centuries ; does not the blood of Count René run in his veins ? ”

As Father Jerome spoke, Theresa felt an involuntary thrill; but sceptical, from the mere force of insulted pride, she looked with contempt on the chaplain and Madame Marguerite, as they both made signs of the cross, and muttered prayers to lay the spirits which their superstitious terrors had raised.

“And well may it now be believed,” resumed Father Jerome, “that the noble Count Ivon avails himself, in these desperate times, of all aid from hereditary rights. Far be it from me, a Christian priest, to encourage unhallowed practices. But if too powerful enemies assail the righteous, let us hope that Heaven will pardon what it does not authorize! And then what says Martin Delrio in his divine work on magic, just lately printed, section seventh of the fourteenth chapter? Does he not prove—”

“Nay, my good father,” said Theresa, with a smile, “he can scarcely prove aught against Count Ivon’s practices to-day!”

“True, fair daughter, nor did I say he could

directly, although he may by inference—for if he prove (as assuredly he does) that men may mix in battle, and do wondrous deeds by the dark aids of magic, and if Count Ivon employ (as he undoubtedly did) a champion of more than mortal prowess, one unknown, furtively introduced into the ranks—”

“Is this so indeed?”

“Ay, indeed is it,” exclaimed Madame Marguerite, impatient of her long silence, and the priest’s long sentences; “and more than that, lights and sounds have for nights past been heard and seen issuing from the Wizard’s Tower.”

“Ay,” said the priest, “and old Ambrose Moenants, and Hugh the falconer, have vowed that the night last past they saw the figure of Count René himself, with his divining rod in his hand, and in his cap and robes, stalking through the gallery, and on the topmost ridge of the tower. And well may Count Ivon, Heaven absolve him! hold parley with his wizard progenitor, and seek magic aid for the protection of his

castle, which mortal power cannot much longer defend !”

“ Not much longer !” exclaimed Madame Marguerite in consternation—“ why I thought it was impregnable ! Dear Lieutenant Gallagher told me so a dozen times—you terrify me, good father.”

“ Impregnable, indeed,” resumed the chaplain, “ if men remain enough to garrison it, and subsistence and munitions of war hold out ; but much I suspect, though it be out of my immediate province to have actual cognizance of the fact, that the short allowance of the past week will be made shorter by one half for that which is coming.”

“ Holy saints ! short allowance !” cried Madame Marguerite.

“ Be explicit, good father ; is the castle reduced indeed to such straits ?” inquired Theresa, anxiously, for she had hitherto seen no symptoms of distress, except in the trifling privations before mentioned, nor had Beatrice or others given her the remotest hint that such existed.

“ Ay, verily, fair damsel, is it reduced to

straits—for three days past our gallant Count Ivon and his brave men have eat nothing but horse-flesh.”

“Holy Virgin! Horse-flesh!” echoed Madame Marguerite, while Theresa started in mixed surprise and disgust.

“Yes, my respectable dame,” continued Father Jerome, drily, “and tender and delicate food it is in times of sack and siege like these. By and by we shall all be well off if an occasional cat, a few rats—”

“Ah!” screamed Madame Marguerite, in a climax of despair, shutting her eyes, and hugging Fanchon in a close embrace, while the pampered animal seemed instinctively to cling to the shelter of her bosom. Theresa felt deeply all the seriousness of the prospect opened by these words of the chaplain. She did not give a thought to the considerations that agonised Madame Marguerite; but she grew pale with dread of a speedy surrender of the castle, which the failure of provisions would assuredly cause. A thousand associations

of terror crowded at once upon her. She sat silent and absorbed for some time, scarcely conscious of the conversation which still went on between her kinswoman and the chaplain, and which embraced every point of immediate and petty interest, without ever extending to subjects of real importance to themselves or others. The bruises of Lieutenant Gallagher formed the topic that most affected Madame Marguerite after those strictly personal to herself. Her chief solace appeared to be in the discussion of a pasty and some baked fruits, which were placed on the table by Nona ; but though assured by Father Jerome that the pasty was composed of tame rabbits, of which a sufficient supply for "the ladies' table" was carefully preserved, the scrupulous dame minutely scrutinized every morsel, lest a portion of some still more domestic animal might be concealed under the savoury blandishments of cookery.

Theresa partook but slightly of the repast, and retired to her bed-room with a heavy heart. She endeavoured to glean information from Nona ;

but she had as yet found little consolation from her: Nona never spoke to her with frankness. She was evidently oppressed by the rapidly approaching crisis of her young mistress's fate. Her confidential connection with Lambert Boonen and Prior Wolfert, seemed to weigh upon her, and her natural reserve on the subject of their designs on Theresa, was heightened by the mingled dignity and delicacy of the latter, which made her shrink from a too familiar communication with even this faithful dependant, on matters involving every finer feeling of her lover as well as herself. She had a pride in the solitude of suffering, that scorned any confidence but with his heart for whom she suffered; and in such a mood did she now deeply ruminate on all the intricate difficulties of situation. Rapid flashes of thought lighted in all its breadth and depth of colouring the mental picture that opened out before her. Her father's and the prior's doubtful, and De Bassenveldt's desperate state, the too probable triumph of Lyderio and Trovaldo, Lambert Boonen's perilous

position—the mystery, the excitement, the agitation that surrounded her seemed all converging to one point.

It was in this state of too painful acuteness, when every event of her life rose clearly before her, that she remembered, for the first time since she had parted from him under the ramparts of Brussels, the timid, faithful, and devoted Renault Claassen. She felt a throb of remorse at the ingratitude of her forgetfulness. At the same instant an involuntary contrast presented itself between his gentle conduct, the impetuous fervour of De Bas-senveldt, the irresistible, yet too incredulous tenderness of Lambert Boonen. She could not restrain a consciousness that she was the inspiration of such deep, yet such varied attachments. Even the minor degrees of homage she had received from her other suitors brought pleasant associations with their recollection ; and she was, after hours of thought, at length finally sinking into quiet slumber, when the striking of the castle-clock imperfectly aroused her. She knew not how

many peals had been sounded, but she felt a mysterious thrill as the recollection of the picture gallery came upon her. She looked beyond the curtains on the faintly glimmering lamp, and she distinguished, with a sensation less of fear than pleasure, a figure close to her bedside. She had become familiar with this visitation. Its regular repetitions were at once a tribute of respect and a pledge of security. The character of our heroine, of her times, and her peculiar situation, must be once more borne in mind by the shrinking fair ones of the present day, who should recollect that what is delicacy in one century would have been but prudery in another. Even in the year 1600, a high sense of chivalrous gallantry, as to acts, held the place which is now usurped by fastidiousness as to forms. These considerations, and many others arising from the events of the tale, must account for, if they may not excuse, Theresa's now raising herself in her bed, with the anxious certainty of discovering in the face of her nocturnal visitor that of De Bassenveldt, who for

the first time had ventured into the scrutiny of lamp light.

The very lamp in an expiring effort seemed at last to favour her wishes ; it threw a sudden and broad gleam across the apartment, and distinctly revealed both form and face. It was beyond all doubt the embodied likeness of Count René, the Wizard ! Theresa's brain was clear, her attention fixed, her heart fearless. Her first thought on observing the robe, the wand, the cuirass, was that Count Ivon, in pursuance of the masquerade she had before suspected, had, as in the picture gallery, assumed this costume to forward his mysterious plan. But she could not now be deceived as to the general likeness so correspondent with the portrait of the wizard count, in age and expression, and shewing the apparent reality of actual life. The gleam of the lamp was not of the fitful kind that might be produced by trick to favour a momentary effect. It was broad and continuous, and lasted until the figure, after a benedictory gesture, moved out by the secret

door, while Theresa followed it with a fixed, but not a terrified gaze. She felt all the awe of a virtuous mind, but none of the fear of a weak one. She had no doubt but that she saw a spirit from another world, but she considered it a token of protection. With a theretofore unfelt steadiness of courage, and elevation of heart, she fervently addressed a prayer to Heaven; and placing her trust above, she resisted every thought that would lose itself in mysterious speculations, quietly laid her head on her pillow, and after a short interval sunk into a profound sleep.

END OF VOL. III.

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